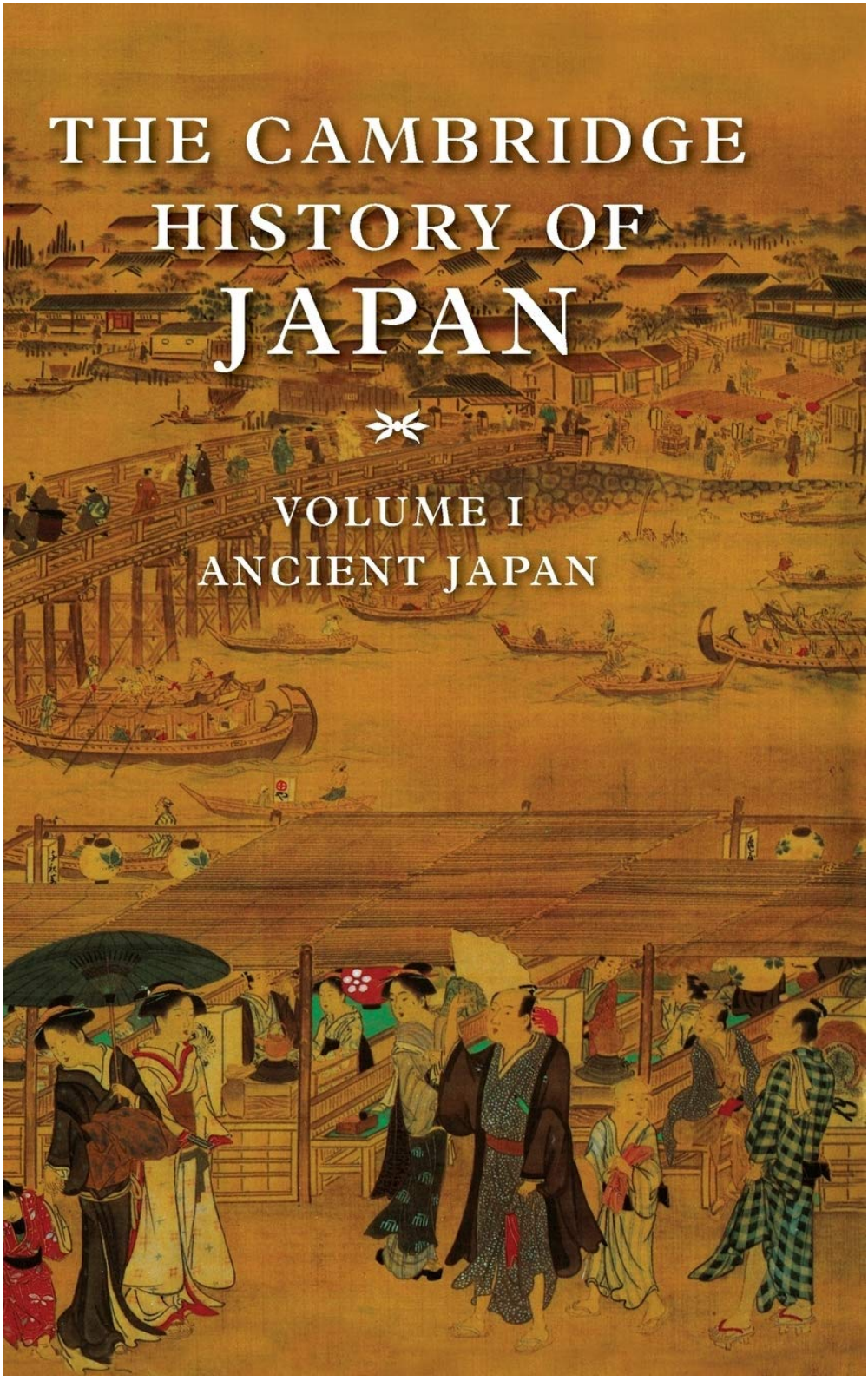
THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF JAPAN



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GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

Since the beginning of this century the Cambridge histories have set a pattern in the English-reading world for multivolume series containing chapters written by specialists under the guidance of volume editors. Plans for a Cambridge history of Japan were begun in the 1970s and completed in 1978. The task was not to be easy. The details of Japanese history are not matters of common knowledge among Western historians. The cultural mode of Japan differs greatly from that of the West, and above all there are the daunting problems of terminology and language. In compensation, however, foreign scholars have been assisted by the remarkable achievements of the Japanese scholars during the last century in recasting their history in modern conceptual and methodological terms.

History has played a major role in Japanese culture and thought, and the Japanese record is long and full. Japan's rulers from ancient times have found legitimacy in tradition, both mythic and historic, and Japan's thinkers have probed for a national morality and system of values in their country's past. The importance of history was also emphasized in the continental cultural influences that entered Japan from early times. Its expression changed as the Japanese consciousness turned to questions of dynastic origin, as it came to reflect Buddhist views of time and reality, and as it sought justification for rule by the samurai estate. By the eighteenth century the successive need to explain the divinity of the government, justify the ruler's place through his virtue and compassion, and interpret the flux of political change had resulted in the fashioning of a highly subjective fusion of Shinto, Buddhist, and Confucian norms.

In the nineteenth century the Japanese became familiar with Western forms of historical expression and felt the need to fit their national history into patterns of a larger world history. As the modern Japanese state took its place among other nations, Japanese history faced the task of reconciling a parochial past with a more catholic present. Historians familiarized themselves with European accounts of the course of

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civilization and described Japan's nineteenth-century turn from military to civilian bureaucratic rule under monarchical guidance as part of a larger, worldwide pattern. Buckle, Guizot, Spencer, and then Marx successively provided interpretative schema.

The twentieth-century ideology of the imperial nation state, however, operated to inhibit full play of universalism in historical interpretation. The growth and ideology of the imperial realm required caution on the part of historians, particularly with reference to Japanese origins.

Japan's defeat in World War II brought release from these inhibitions and for a time replaced them with compulsive denunciation of the pretensions of the imperial state. Soon the expansion of higher education brought changes in the size and variety of the Japanese scholarly world. Historical inquiry was now free to range widely. A new opening to the West brought lively interest in historical expressions in the West, and a historical profession that had become cautiously and expertly positivist began to rethink its material in terms of larger patterns.

At just this juncture the serious study of Japanese history began in the West. Before World War II the only distinguished general survey of Japanese history in English was G. B. Sansom's *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, first published in 1931 and still in print. English and American students of Japan, many trained in wartime language programs, were soon able to travel to Japan for study and participation with Japanese scholars in cooperative projects. International conferences and symposia produced volumes of essays that served as benchmarks of intellectual focus and technical advance. Within Japan itself an outpouring of historical scholarship, popular publishing, and historical romance heightened the historical consciousness of a nation aware of the dramatic changes to which it was witness.

In 1978 plans were adopted to produce this series on Japanese history as a way of taking stock of what has been learned. The present generation of Western historians can draw upon the solid foundations of the modern Japanese historical profession. The decision to limit the enterprise to six volumes meant that topics such as the history of art and literature, aspects of economics and technology and science, and the riches of local history would have to be left out. They too have been the beneficiaries of vigorous study and publication in Japan and in the Western world.

Multivolume series have appeared many times in Japanese since the beginning of the century, but until the 1960s the number of profession-

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ally trained historians of Japan in the Western world was too small to sustain such an enterprise. Although that number has grown, the general editors have thought it best to draw on Japanese specialists for contributions in areas where they retain a clear authority. In such cases the act of translation itself involves a form of editorial cooperation that requires the skills of a trained historian whose name deserves acknowledgment.

The primary objective of the present series is to put before the English-reading audience as complete a record of Japanese history as possible. But the Japanese case attracts our attention for other reasons as well. To some it has seemed that the more we have come to know about Japan the more we are drawn to the apparent similarities with Western history. The long continuous course of Japan's historical record has tempted historians to look for resemblances between its patterns of political and social organization and those of the West. The rapid emergence of Japan's modern nation state has occupied the attention of comparative historians, both Japanese and Western. On the other hand, specialists are inclined to point out the dangers of being misled by seeming parallels.

The striking advances in our knowledge of Japan's past will continue and accelerate. Western historians of this great and complex subject will continue to grapple with it, and they must as Japan's world role becomes more prominent. The need for greater and deeper understanding of Japan will continue to be evident. Japanese history belongs to the world, not only as a right and necessity but also as a subject of compelling interest.

JOHN WHITNEY HALL
MARIUS B. JANSEN
MADOKA KANAI
DENIS TWITCHETT

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PREFACE TO VOLUME 1

We now know that human beings have lived on the Japanese archipelago for about 100,000 years. Volume I of *The Cambridge History of Japan* proposes to cover the first 99,000 years, a long period that ended when Japan's imperial capital was moved away from Heijō (now Nara) in A.D. 784. But until the introduction of agriculture and the use of iron tools and weapons around 300 B.C., people residing on that northeastern appendage to the Asian continent had made only slight progress toward civilization. Consequently, most of this volume is devoted to the final one thousand years (from 300 B.C. to A.D. 784) – the ninety-eighth millennium – of Japan's ancient past.

The last two centuries (587–784) of that millennium receive a disproportionate share of attention, even though archaeological discoveries and meticulous research in Korean and Chinese sources now make it possible to outline a relatively rapid rise of kingdoms during the previous eight centuries. At about the time of Christ, some of these kingdoms were exchanging missions with the courts of imperial China, and by the third century A.D. the kingdom of Yamato was making military conquests in distant regions of the archipelago and burying its priestly rulers in huge burial mounds (*kofun*).

Spectacular change followed the seizure of control in 587 by an immigrant clan (the Soga) whose leaders encouraged a widespread adoption of Chinese high culture: religious beliefs and practices (Taoism and Buddhism), ethical teachings (Confucianism), literary tastes (poetry and history), artistic techniques and styles (architecture, painting, and sculpture), as well as penal and administrative law (codes and commentaries). A great spurt of reform activity came in and after the 660s when two Korean kingdoms (Koguryŏ and Paekche) came under the hegemony of China's expanding T'ang empire and when a Japanese naval force – sent to the support of Paekche – was virtually annihilated. Fearing that Japan, too, would be invaded by China, the new leaders adopted a wide range of Chinese methods for strengthening military defense and state control, relying heavily on the services of men who had lived and

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studied for years in China and on refugees from Korean kingdoms conquered by Chinese armies. Within a few decades, Japan's old "clan system" was transformed into something like a Chinese empire.

This control over all lands and peoples was then reinforced by a Chinese-style bureaucracy headed by an emperor or empress who was revered as a manifest deity (*kami*), a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu) and the country's highest priest or priestess of kami worship. The imperial system was further strengthened – especially during the eighth century – by a statewide system of Buddhist temples in which exotic rites were performed in order to ensure peace and prosperity for the imperial state.

We can still obtain a sense of Nara period grandeur when we see in the Nara of today the remains of (1) a great Chinese-style capital built at the beginning of the eighth century, (2) the central temple (the Tōdai-ji) erected in the middle years of the century as the centerpiece of the Buddhist system, (3) the imposing fifty-two-foot-high Great Buddha statue completed in 752 and still honored as the Tōdai-ji's central object of worship, (4) the storehouse (Shōsō-in) where the prized possessions of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–745) have been preserved, and (5) many statues, paintings, chronicles, poems, documents, and memos made or written when Nara was becoming an impressive "sacred center" of a Japanese empire.

Research by thousands of Japanese scholars working with new evidence found on the continent as well as in Japan have produced massive amounts of information concerning the thousand years (from 300 B.C. to A.D. 784) commonly referred to as Japan's ancient age. But only a general overview of that age can be provided in a single volume, and interpretations and analyses based on methods and perspectives of different disciplines reveal such fluid patterns of interactive change that some conclusions drawn here may soon need to be revised. Western scholars have made valuable contributions to our understanding of Japanese life in this ancient age, especially through translations and holistic studies of religious subjects. But Japanese specialists, participating in an "ancient history boom," have shed such a flood of light on life in those early times that six distinguished Japanese historians were invited to write six of the volume's ten chapters.

Unfortunately, two of the Japanese authors died before their chapters could be completed: Inoue Mitsusada, before the second half of his chapter "The Century of Reform" had been written, and Okazaki Takashi, before his chapter "Japan and the Continent" had been adjusted to the discovery of recent and important archaeological finds. Much of

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these two chapters – and another, "Early Buddha Worship" by Sonoda Kōyū – had to be rewritten or substantially revised.

After Inoue's death, Takagi Kiyoko wrote a summary of seventh-century developments not covered in the unfinished Inoue manuscript. These two manuscripts were then ably translated into English by John Wisnom. But because early sections of the Inoue portion of Chapter 3 duplicated a section of Chapter 2, and the two manuscripts provided no coherent pattern of historical change in the century of reform, it was decided that the chapter should be recast. Takagi and Wisnom read the revision and offered valuable suggestions for improvement but did not feel that they should be listed as coauthors or translators. We are, however, deeply indebted to Takagi for thoughtful interpretations and Wisnom for painstaking research on names and titles.

Having translated Chapter 5 ("Japan and the Continent") and read the articles and reports published by Okazaki Takashi, Janet Goodwin wrote a number of proposed additions. But Okazaki was then too ill to be contacted for approval. Shortly before his death, reports on archaeological discoveries at Yoshinogari in Kyushu led some Japanese scholars to conclude that Yoshinogari may have been the capital of a Japanese "country" mentioned in the *Wei shu*, a third-century Chinese dynastic history that includes an account of what members of a Chinese mission to Japan had seen and heard. Goodwin had an opportunity to visit the site in 1989, and after studying some reports (including a preliminary official one) and interviewing several scholars, she wrote additional pages for the author's consideration. But Okazaki could not be consulted, and he died a few months later. What Goodwin wrote is included as a translator's note.

For Chapter 7, "Early Buddha Worship," Sonoda Kōyū submitted a scholarly and detailed study of Buddhist history in Korea before 587, plus a brief treatment of the spread of Buddhism to Japan. John W. Buscaglia, then a graduate student in Buddhist studies at Yale University, made an excellent translation of the manuscript, giving close attention to the identification and explanation of names and terms. It was then decided that the material on Korea should be condensed and that additional sections should be written on the early years of Japanese Buddhism. Unfortunately, Sonoda and Buscaglia were unable to undertake these tasks, thereby leaving them to the editor.

The Introduction to this volume attempts to show (1) how recent studies of the ancient past have been directed to developments outside

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the boundaries set by enduring preoccupations, (2) how analyses of historical development are now being sharpened by the use of core beliefs as analytical models, and (3) how postagricultural periods are identified with four great waves of change that have shaped and colored the history of Japan from early times to the present. The first four chapters contain broad surveys of successive periods: the pre-Jōmon, Jōmon, and Yayoi to about A.D. 250, the Yamato state to 587, the century of reform to 672, and the Nara state to 784. The remaining chapters are devoted mainly to nonpolitical fields of historical change during the last two centuries of the ancient age.

As in the other volumes, conventional systems for romanizing Japanese, Korean, and Chinese terms and names are used: the Hepburn for Japanese, the McCune–Reischauer for Korean, and the Wade–Giles for Chinese. Asian personal names are referred to in the native manner – surnames followed by given names – except when the Asian authors are writing in English. Books and articles are listed in the Works Cited, and the Chinese characters for names and terms appear in the Glossary–Index. Years recorded in Japanese eras (*nengō*) are converted to years by the Western calendar, but months and days are not.

I join the editors of the other five volumes in thanking the Japan Foundation for funds that facilitated the production of this series. The costs of publishing this book have been supported in part by an award from the Hiromi Arisawa Memorial Fund, which is named in honor of the renowned economist and the first chairman of the Board of the University of Tokyo Press. My special thanks go also to the authors and translators for their gracious patience, and to the following scholars who have read one or more chapters and made valuable suggestions for improvement: Peter Duus, Lewis Lancaster, Robert Lee, Betsy Scheiner, Taiichiro Shiraishi, and Thomas Smith.

Delmer M. Brown

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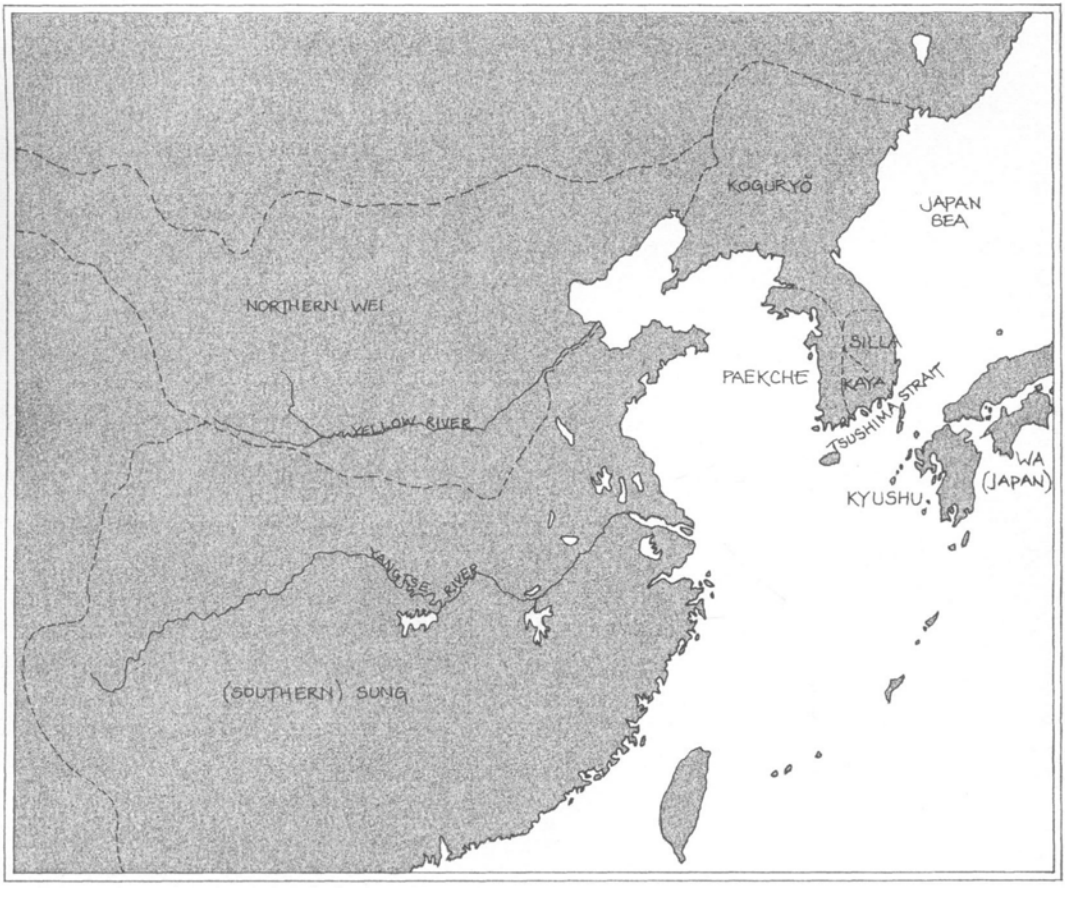

Northeast Asia, Sung period. (Based on Ueda Masaki, *Ōkimi no seiki*, 1975, inside back cover.)

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Korea and Japan, Yayoi.

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CHRONOLOGY

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF ASIA UP TO A.D. 250

Approximate date[1]	Japan	Korea	China
Middle Pleistocene			Paleolithic and Mesolithic cultures
10,500 B.C.	Paleolithic and Mesolithic (Sōsōki: sub-earliest Jōmon)	Paleolithic and Mesolithic	
7000 B.C.	Early Jōmon		
5000 B.C.			Neolithic Agriculture Yang-shao culture (Yellow River) Ta-p'en-k'eng (southeastern coast)
3000 B.C.	Middle Jōmon Sobata pottery	Neolithic Tongsam-dong site (Chŭlmun culture): Mumun culture	
2400 B.C.	Late Jōmon		
1750 B.C.			Shang (Bronze Age)
1100 B.C.		Agriculture Hunam site Bronze Age	Western Chou

1 Scholars' estimates of dates vary, especially in Korea and Japan before 400–300 B.C. Dates tend to be better substantiated in the case of China.

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770 B.C.	Terminal Jōmon Itazuke site (Yusu pottery) Saitoyama		Eastern Chou (Iron Age)
400 B.C.		Iron Age	Warring states
300 B.C.	Early Yayoi Agriculture Bronze and iron Sites: Itazuke (Itazuke I pottery) Ukiunden (bronzes)	Chŏson and Samhan cul- tures	
221 B.C.			Ch'in dynasty
206 B.C.			Former Han
109 B.C.		Lo-lang Colony (Korean: Nangnang)	
100 B.C.	Middle Yayoi Sites: Okamato, Yasunagata, Ōmagari Mine, Higashi Oda Mine, Kashiwazaki Tajima, Mikumo, Sugu Okamoto, Tateiwa		
A.D. 8			Wang Mang Interregnum Later Han
A.D. 25			
A.D. 57	Late Yayoi Gold Seal from Han		
A.D. 222	Himiko (Yamatai)		Wei, Wu, Shu Han Chinese visit to Japan
A.D. 239	Embassy to Wei		
A.D. 250	Burial Mound period		Northern and southern cultures

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CHRONOLOGY OF JAPAN FROM B.C. 300 TO A.D. 794

B.C. 300–A.D. 100	Rice cultivation, Yayoi culture in Japan.
57	According to Chinese records, a tribal king of Na in Kyūshū pays tribute to Eastern Han Emperor Kuang Wu and receives official seal.
107	*History of the Later Han* reports that Na king sends 160 slaves as tribute to China.
180	Himiko unites neighboring tribes and becomes the queen of Yamatai.
240	Wei Court of China acknowledges Himiko as the queen of Japan with a gold seal.
285	*Analects* and *Thousand Character Classic* enter Japan from Paekche.
369	According to *Nihon shoki,* Japan defeats Silla, and Mimana is established; Isonokami sword received from Paekche.
421–78	Five Yamato kings send tribute to Chinese court.
512	Four prefectures of Mimana are transferred to Paekche.
513	Scholar of the Five Classics arrives from Paekche.
527	Iwai, *kuni no miyatsuko* of Tsukushi (North Kyushu), rebels.
538	Paekche king presents Buddhist statue and sutra.
554	Experts in medicine, divination, and calendar arrive from Paekche.
562	Mimana absorbed by Silla.
587	Mononobe overcome by Soga.
589	Rise of Sui dynasty in China.
592	Soga no Umako assassinates Sushun; Suiko enthroned.
593	Prince Shōtoku installed as regent; Buddhism patronized.
600	Envoy sent to Sui court in China.
603	Twelve court-rank system of China adopted.
604	Seventeen Injunctions ("Constitution") issued by Shōtoku.
607	Ono no Imoko sent to Sui, returns the following year and is sent back to China with students.
618	T'ang dynasty established in China.
622	Death of Prince Shōtoku
640	Takamuko no Kuromaro and Minabuchi no Shōan return from three decades of study in China.
643	Soga no Iruka exterminates the family of Prince Shōtoku's son, Yamashiro no Ōe.
645	Prince Naka no Ōe assassinates Soga no Iruka. Great Reforms of Taika. Capital moved to Naniwa.
646	Reform decree promulgated.

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649	Nineteen court-rank system established. Soga Ishikawa Maro is killed.
660	Silla defeats Paekche with help of T'ang army.
661	Japanese force sent to the support of Paekche.
663	Japanese navy annihilated by T'ang navy.
664	Twenty-six step court-rank system established.
667	Capital moved to Ōtsu in Ōmi Province.
668	Prince Naka no Ōe enthroned as Emperor Tenji.
670	Nationwide household registration carried out.
671	Ōmi code promulgated.
672	Civil war; Prince Ōama enthroned as Temmu. Capital moved to Asuka in Yamato Province.
681	Compilation of *Kojiki* ordered.
689	Asuka no Kiyomihara civil code promulgated.
694	Capital moved to Fujiwara in Yamato Province.
701	Embassy to T'ang court authorized after a thirty-year interval. Tsushima presents gold. Era name changed. Taihō civil and penal codes promulgated.
708	Copper brought as tribute from Musashi no kuni. Era name changed. First Japanese coin, *Wadō kaichin*, minted.
710	Empress Gemmei moves capital to Heijō-kyō (Nara).
712	*Kojiki* completed by Ō no Yasumaro.
713	Provinces ordered to compile reports (*fudoki*).
718	Fujiwara no Fuhito compiles the Yōrō civil and penal codes.
720	*Nihon shoki* completed.
724	Shōmu enthroned as emperor. Taga fortification established at Sendai to counter Ainu unrest.
727	P'o-hai sends envoy to Japan.
735	Kibi no Makibi and Gembō return from T'ang.
735–7	Smallpox epidemic spreads from Kyushu to capital region.
740	Fujiwara no Hirotsugu revolts in Kyushu.
741	Construction of provincial Buddhist temples, *kokubunji*, ordered.
743	Permanent ownership of rice-bearing land permitted.
749	Gold presented as tribute from Mutsu Province; Shōmu issues edict before the Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji. Era name changed.
751	*Kaifūsō* anthology completed.
752	Great Buddha of Tôdai-ji completed.
754	Priest Ganjin comes from China.
756	Shōsō-in constructed.
757	Fujiwara no Nakamaro defeates Tachibana no Nakamaro in attempt to seize power.

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764 Fujiwara no Nakamaro revolt crushed. Former Empress Kōken resumes throne as Shōtoku.

765 Priest Dōkyō named minister of state, and the following year is given the title of Buddhist king (Hō-ō).

770 Dōkyō exiled after the death of Empress Shōtoku.

781 Emperor Kammu enthroned.

784 Capital moved to Nagaoka.

788 Priest Saichō builds Enryaku-ji.

794 Capital moved to Heian-kyō (Kyoto).

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INTRODUCTION

Japanese historical accounts written during the last twelve hundred years have been consistently narrowed and influenced by three preoccupations: first, by an age old absorption in an "unbroken" line of sovereigns descended from the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu), leading historians to concern themselves largely with imperial history and to overlook changes in other areas; second, by a continuing concern with Japan's cultural uniqueness, causing many intellectuals, especially those from the eighteenth century to the close of World War II, to be intensely interested in purely Japanese ways and to miss the significance of Chinese and Korean influences; and third, by the modern tendency of scholars to specialize in studies of economic productivity, political control, and social integration and thus to avoid holistic investigations of interaction between secular and religious thought and action.

But in recent years historians have extended their studies to questions that lie well beyond the boundaries set by these enduring preoccupations. This Introduction will attempt to outline the nature of this shift and to point out how research in new areas – and from new points of view – has broadened and deepened our understanding of Japan's ancient age.

NEW HORIZONS

Beyond genealogy

Belief in a single line of priestly rulers was strong as far back as the third century A.D. when the Japanese kingdom of Yamatai, according to an item found in an early Chinese dynastic history, was governed by hereditary rulers. Later in that same century a powerful kingdom based in the Yamato region of central Japan emerged under a succession of kings and queens who ruled as blood relatives of their predecessors. Gaining control over most of the Japanese islands and a portion

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of the Korean peninsula, they erected huge mounds (*kofun*) in which to bury their priestly predecessors – mounds that were truly impressive monuments to inherited authority. Because the Yamato kings and queens (*ōkimi*) have long been considered direct ancestors of the later Japanese emperors and empresses (*tennō*), the government of present-day Japan still does not permit excavations at *kofun* where Yamato rulers are thought to have been buried. Largely on the basis of research carried out at hundreds of other *kofun* sites, historians are beginning to agree that the Yamato kings and queens were willing to use much of their human and material resources for mound building because they believed that this was the best way to symbolize, sanctify, and strengthen their positions on the sacred line of descent.

Incontestable proof of descent-line preoccupation is found in an inscription carved on a fifth-century sword unearthed at Inariyama in northeastern Japan. It includes the names of six clan (*uji*) chieftains who served Yamato kings, and each name is identified as the son of the chieftain ahead of him on the list. Equally strong evidence of this early absorption in genealogy is obtained from descent myths passed along by word of mouth and finally assigned core positions in chronicles (the *Kojiki*[1] and the *Nihon shoki*[2]) compiled at the beginning of the eighth century. The chronicles themselves were shaped and tinted by the urge to exalt an imperial line running from the Sun Goddess through the Yamato kings to the emperors and empresses reigning in the seventh century (see Chapter 10).

Nearly all the large structures (burial mounds, capitals, sanctuaries) and written materials (chronicles, poems, inscriptions) erected or composed during the last two centuries of Japan's ancient age were meant to enhance the current ruler's position on the sacred descent line. This preoccupation was expressed also in myths and rituals of local regions that had been placed under direct imperial control. Festivals (*matsuri*) honoring the ancestral deities (kami[3]) of the imperial clan were thus

1 Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Shintei zōho: kokushi taikei* (hereafter cited as KT) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959), vol. 1; translated by Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968).

2 Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vols. 67 and 68; translated by W. G. Aston, *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (hereafter cited as Aston) (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956).

3 Just what a kami is and how the word should be translated has been discussed and debated for years. Some scholars are inclined to think that the term was introduced from Korea. In Japan it has long denoted unseen deities that reside in awesome things (*shintai* or "kami bodies") located in particular places. For a thoughtful reexamination of views regarding kami, see John Keane, SA, "The Kami Concept: A Basis for Understanding the Dialogue," *Orients Studies*, no. 16 (December 1980): 1–50.

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customarily held not only at the capital whenever a new sovereign was enthroned but also at local shrines where rituals had been established by imperial authority. Therefore most historical writing, especially that by officials, has long been affected by a deep and lasting belief in the divinity of Japan's sacred imperial line.

This belief was strengthened during World War II by the government's endeavors to arouse feelings of loyalty to the current occupant of the throne. Under the influence of an intellectual climate charged with "emperorism," thousands of soldiers willingly marched into hopeless battles screaming *tennō heika banzai* (long live the emperor), and hundreds of pilots volunteered for suicidal attacks remembered as *kamikaze* (kami wind) raids. Japan's Department of Education published and distributed a book on the emperor-headed *kokutai* (nation body) for the guidance of teachers and students,[4] and historians produced a flood of printed material on the origins, development, and divinity of Japan's "unbroken" imperial line.

Although considerable study is still devoted to the ancient roots of Japan's emperor institution, the grip of imperial-line preoccupation was definitely broken by defeat in World War II. The Allied Occupation forced the adoption of a constitution that separated politics from religion and made the emperor a symbolic head of state, not a divine descendant of the Sun Goddess. After the war some individuals even dared to say and write that Japan no longer needed an emperor, and many historians exercised their new freedom by questioning the origins of an imperial institution that had long been considered too sacred for objective and critical study. They probed for the significance of phrases and paragraphs copied from Korean and Chinese accounts, expressed doubts about the authenticity of reports that could not be squared with other sorts of evidence, and made distinctions between myth and historical fact. Writers who had previously accepted ancient myths of divine descent as literal truth have maintained that Japan's single line of imperial descent has at times been badly bent if not actually broken, that some traditional dates are several centuries off, and that certain occupants of the imperial throne may have been Korean descendants. Others have looked through existing sources for signs of historical change within myths (essentially ahistorical verbalizations of rites), discovering themes appropriate to different periods of Japan's ancient past (see Chapter 6).

4 John Owen Gauntlett, trans., *Kokutai no Hongi, Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949).

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In this fresh air of religious and intellectual freedom, archaeologists have thrown much new light on the "prehistoric" age of Japan by discovering material evidence from thousands of sites throughout the Japanese islands, other than the tombs of Yamato kings.[5] These new data, coupled with information gleaned from continental sources and historical truth extracted from recorded myths, permit historians to delineate a process by which a centralized Yamato state emerged during the third century, flourished in the fifth, and declined in the sixth. By looking objectively at this new evidence through wide-angle lenses, they can now see that the line of Yamato kings was not simply an early segment of Japan's imperial line but a succession of priestly rulers who had gained awesome economic and military power by adopting imported techniques for building tombs and irrigation systems, making and using iron tools and weapons, and running an increasingly complex bureaucracy (see Chapter 2).

For the earlier Yayoi period – beginning with Japan's agricultural age around 300 B.C. and continuing to the rise of the Yamato state in about A.D. 250 – archaeological reports have been almost as startling. Based on investigations at sites in various regions of the country, they show that the rapid spread of wet-rice agriculture was accompanied by larger and more stable social groups, higher degrees of social interdependence, and tighter political control. At the beginning of this process, agricultural communities appeared. Then came small kingdoms that, by the middle of the Yayoi period, were gradually incorporated into what has been called "kingdom federations." According to the archaeological evidence, it is thought that these federations were profiting from exchanges with neighbors as far away as Korea, enabling them to acquire or make symbolic bronzes (mirrors, weapons, and bells) and such useful iron implements as spades, swords, and spears.[6]

Archaeological discoveries for pre-Yayoi times have also opened our eyes to change during the more than eight thousand years of Japan's preagricultural pottery age. This Jōmon ("rope-patterned" pottery) period probably began around 8500 B.C. when a gradual rise of the sea level off the northeastern coast of Asia was turning Japan into an insular land and when clay pots were first made and used. But pre-

5 The results of archaeological investigations, including research on wooden tablets (*mokkan*), were outlined by Joan R. Piggott, "Keeping Up with the Past: New Discoveries Enrich Our Views of History," *Monumenta Nipponica* 38 (Autumn 1983): 313–19.

6 For an excellent recent summary of what is now known about Yayoi life, see Tsude Hiroshi, "Nōkō shakai no keisei," in *Genshi kodai*, vol. 1 of Asao Naohiro, Ishii Susumu, Inoue Mitsusada, Ōishi Kaichirō et al. eds., *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1984), pp. 117–58.

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Jōmon discoveries have also been dramatic, forcing historians to continue moving the beginning of Japan's stone age further into the past. Until a few years ago, they concluded that this stone age dated back to about 20,000 B.C. But they now say it goes back to around 100,000 B.C.,[7] and before these pages go to press they will surely be saying – in the light of new discoveries – that people lived on the islands of Japan much earlier than that.

While archaeologists have been investigating the remains of life in a past that was until recently largely unknown and unimagined (see Chapters 1 and 5), historians have been using these and other types of evidence to study currents of change that flowed through and beyond the genealogical sphere. In doing so they provide penetrating views of change in the highly textured life that followed the introduction and spread of wet-rice agriculture and that reached high points of cultural sophistication before the Nara period came to a close. Special attention has been given to changing forms of kami worship (Chapter 6), Buddhist development (Chapter 7), economic growth (Chapter 8), cultural achievement (Chapter 9), and the emergence of a historical consciousness (Chapter 10). Studies under these and other rubrics enable generalists to draw a fuller picture of life in particular periods: the Yayoi (Chapter 1). the Yamato (Chapter 2), the reform century (Chapter 3), and the Nara (Chapter 4).

Beyond Japan

Preoccupation with cultural uniqueness first narrowed and sharpened Japanese views of their ancient past in the eighteenth century. This was when national learning (*kokugaku*) scholars, such as Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), turned against a Neo-Confucian ideology that was introduced from China and that, with revisions, was officially endorsed by the Tokugawa military regime. In searching for a Japanese substitute, national learning scholars made meticulous studies of ancient sources, looking for unmistakable evidence of what was said and done before the country was inundated by Korean and Chinese texts. But the urge to carry out such investigations became much stronger in the nineteenth century when Japan faced, and reacted to, pressure exerted by expanding Western powers. Resentment of the West – in response first to the West's use of modern guns and ships along Japan's shores and then to its religious beliefs and political

7 Yoshie Akio, *Rekishi no akebono kara dentō shakai no seijuku e: genshi, kodai, chūsei*, vol. 1 of *Nihon tsūshi* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1986), p. 27.

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ideas – peaked in the years around World War II. Western individualism and egalitarianism were rejected at this time, and ancient Japanese traditions were embraced. Even the use of Western words and the wearing of Western clothes were officially discouraged. And historical studies highlighted the country's kami-created imperial system (*tennō-sei*), its indomitable Japanese spirit (*Nihon seishin*), and its divine "nation body" (*kokutai*).[8]

Japanese absorption in their cultural uniqueness seems to have induced Western scholars to translate and study ancient sources that were highly valued by national learning scholars and by World War II historians writing about the glories of Japan's imperial past. In 1882 Basil Hall Chamberlain translated the *Kojiki*, the ancient chronicle to which Motoori had turned in his search for uniqueness;[9] in 1896 W. G. Aston produced an English version of the *Nihon shoki*, the next-oldest chronicle and the first of Japan's Six National Histories;[10] in 1932 Sir George B. Sansom combed through early chronicles for his study of ancient law and government;[11] in 1934 J. B. Snellen translated portions of the *Shoku Nihongi*, the second of the Six National Histories and the one covering the Nara period;[12] in 1935 M. W. DeVisser used ancient sources to write a two-volume study of government-supported Buddhism;[13] between 1970 and 1972 Felicia G. Bock translated the first ten books of the *Engi shiki*, legal procedures compiled in response to an imperial order issued in 905;[14] In 1973 Cornelius J. Kiley analyzed ancient sources for his research on imperial lineage in ancient times;[15] and between 1974 and 1978 Richard J. Miller compiled data recorded in ancient chronicles for his investigations of clans and imperial bureaucracy during the Nara period.[16]

8 See Delmer M. Brown, *Nationalism in Japan: An Introductory Historical Analysis* (New York: Russel and Russel, 1971).

9 This translation appeared first in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (hereafter cited as TASJ) 10 1st series (supplement) (1882): 1–139. For a more recent translation, see n. 1.

10 See n. 2.

11 George B. Sansom, "Early Japanese Law and Administration", TASJ 9, 2nd series (1932): 67–109, and TASJ 11 (1934): 117–49.

12 J. B. Snellen, "Shoku Nihongi (Chronicles of Japan)," TASJ 11, 2nd series (1934): 151–239 and TASJ 14 (1937): 209–78.

13 M. W. DeVisser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan: Sutras and Ceremonies in Use in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries A.D. and Their History in Later Times*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1935).

14 Felicia G. Bock, trans., *Engi-shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era [Books 1–5]* and *Engi-shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era [Books 6–10]* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1970 and 1972).

15 Cornelius J. Kiley, "State and Dynasty in Archaic Yamato," *Journal of Asian Studies* 33 (November 1973): 25–49.

16 Richard J. Miller, *Ancient Japanese Nobility: The Kabane Ranking System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974); and Richard J. Miller, *Japan's First Bureaucracy: A Study of Eighth-Century Government*, Cornell University East Asia Papers, no. 19. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, China–Japan Program, 1978).

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The recent popularity of TV programs on life in ancient Japan is due in part to a lingering effect of wartime efforts to deepen belief in the country's unique and sacred institutions. But because today's ancient history "boom" has not been fueled by an emotional rejection of foreign ways, scholars are much more open to the significance of imported techniques and ideas. Their studies help us see how life was fundamentally altered in those early days by the importation of advanced methods for growing rice, making iron implements, erecting large burial mounds, installing complex irrigation systems, and building grand sanctuaries and capitals. New insights into the nature and extent of continental influence have been obtained from mainly three types of investigation. The first is research in Chinese and Korean sources. (Inoue Hideo, for example, translated an ancient Korean history, and Inoue Mitsusada, in Chapter 3, examines early Japanese history in the context of the contemporary Northeast Asian situation.) The second kind of investigation is the archaeological excavations at thousands of sites throughout the Japanese islands. (As noted by J. E. Kidder in Chapter 1, the Takatsuka and Fujinoki sites have attracted special attention because the excavated grave goods and wall paintings were obviously made by Korean immigrants.) The third type is the comparative archaeological investigations. (In Chapter 5 Okazaki Takashi uses the results of such studies to discuss the origin and timing of important technological and cultural imports.)

A new awareness of the effects of early continental influence is reflected also in comparative studies outside the fields of history and archaeology, especially in mythology, folklore, linguistics, cultural and social studies, and anthropology. Without detailing the contributions made by these diverse disciplines, we note only that (1) Chapter 6 by Matsumae Takeshi is based on important investigations in mythology and folklore; (2) Yoshie Akio and other sociologists have produced valuable studies of social life in ancient times;[17] and (3) Carmen Blacker has compared different forms of shamanism in Asia, carried out extensive field work, and written a masterful study of Japanese shamanism.[18]

As more scholars come to recognize the importance of Korean and Chinese influence on Japanese cultural development, a few Japanese scholars are beginning to look differently at their country's cultural uniqueness. Instead of accepting the national learning assumption that

17 See Yoshie, *Rekishi no akebono*.

18 Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1975).

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the essence of what is unique can be found only in beliefs and ideas untarnished by foreign influence, a few have concluded that the very core of Japanese culture has been continually altered and reinforced by religious beliefs, ethical principles, and political concepts introduced from Korea and China.[19]

Beyond the secular

Today, scholars of Japanese ancient history tend to be interested mainly in the hard facts of political control, economic productivity, and social integration, not in the power of beliefs and ideas. Preoccupation with what can be measured, dated, and documented (in contrast with wholeness, quality, and value) has certainly been strengthened by Western historical thought, especially by the economic materialism of Karl Marx. But Japanese secular interests have been sharpened also by the country's spectacular economic growth in recent years and by a widespread distaste for inquiries even remotely connected with wartime propaganda focused on the marvels of the Japanese spirit.

To be sure, our understanding of Japan's ancient past has been deepened and broadened by the work of secular-minded historians. As we noted, some have looked beyond genealogical concerns to interactions among hitherto-unexamined spheres of secular life, and others have tried to assess the influence of techniques introduced from foreign lands. But only a few have ventured outside the bounds of secular change to assess the effects of the spiritual power believed to flow from and through divine beings, sacred priests, kami rites, funeral services, and sacred capitals. Even studies of religious practices in ancient times are likely to be based on visual, textual, and datable manifestations of religious life, not on connections – let us say – between religious activity and state policy. Consequently, most investigations of Japan's early religious life can be characterized as detailed descriptions of particular sects, priests, and texts – investigations that do not ask, for example, why a powerful political patron preferred one doctrine to another. But a change is now taking place as more historians begin to look beyond the power of secular energy to that of widespread belief in divine beings and forces. And some scholars are even venturing into holistic research and making interpretations based on the use of conceptual models.

19 Yuasa Yasuo took this position in *Kodaijin no seishin sekai*, vol. 1 of *Rekishi to Nihonjin* (Kyoto: Mineruba shobō, 1980).

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TOWARD A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Moves toward a more holistic approach to the study of Japan's ancient past are now attracting attention. Ishida Ichirō has developed the thesis that kami belief has provided, throughout Japan's history, its most basic cultural values.[20] Ienaga Saburō, a distinguished intellectual historian, has disclosed a meaningful linkage, at different times and places, between political interests and preferred Buddhist doctrines.[21]

Two Americans have also made important holistic studies. Joan Piggott, in a forthcoming book on the Tōdai-ji (temple), demonstrates that Emperor Shōmu (A.D. 701–56) and his court were willing to use much of their human and material resources to construct a statewide system of temples because they hoped and believed this would bolster imperial control at a time of economic strain and political instability.[22]

Allan G. Grapard, in a book on the Kasuga cult, rejects the old assumption that the best way to deepen our understanding of Japanese religious history is to dig deeply into one aspect of a faith while disregarding other religious traditions. He claims, moreover, that our picture of religion at any time and place in Japan will be flawed if we examine only the two major faiths (kami worship and Buddha worship) apart from nonreligious currents generated by expanding clans and imperial regimes. Claiming that the usual investigations of priests, sects, and texts will not explain the essence of religious change, Grapard hypothesizes that Japan's religiosity in the Nara period took its character from developments at particular places where the beliefs and practices of clans had a "combinative" relationship with imported Buddhism and with social and economic developments, as clearly reflected in discussions of legitimacy and power. Special significance is seen in the fact that the Kasuga Shrine (the place for worshiping the Fujiwara tutelary kami) and the Kōfuku Temple (the place for honoring Fujiwara ancestors) were built in Nara just when the Fujiwara clan was rising to a position of power and influence at the imperial court.[23]

A small but growing number of intellectual historians are now convinced that a truer picture of ancient life can be drawn by using

20 Ishida Ichirō, *Kami to Nihon bunka: Shintōron josetsu* (Tokyo: Pereikansha, 1983).

21 See Ienaga Saburō, *Jodai Bukkyō shisō shi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hotei shobō, 1942); and Ienaga Saburō, *Nihon bunka shi*, no. 187 of the *Iwanami shinsho* series, 4th ed. (Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1984).

22 Joan R. Piggott, "Tōdaiji and the Nara Imperium" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1987) is used and cited in Chapter 7.

23 Allan G. Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

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conceptualized models, or paradigms, as analytical tools. Concluding that traditional narrow, specialized treatments will reveal no more than disconnected slices of past reality, they are constructing paradigms (relatively unchanging fields of cultural energy) to help them see cultural change as a whole. By using this approach, they will be better able to analyze complex cultural interactions throughout history and not be left to grope for the general picture after reading descriptive studies of what happened in disparate historical fields over short periods of time.

The earliest and most significant strides in this direction were taken by Muraoka Tsunetsugu (1884–1946) before World War II when historical writing was restricted and colored by Japan's preoccupation with divine imperial descent and cultural uniqueness. After devoting considerable research to the religious history of the West, Muraoka delved into Shinto thought and found three basic characteristics: (1) "imperial country-ism" (*kōkoku shugi*), (2) "reality-ism" (*genjitsu shugi*), and (3) "brightness–purity-ism" (*meijō shugi*).[24] In selecting "imperial country-ism" as his first characteristic, Muraoka seems – under the influence of the contemporary preoccupation with Japan's single line of sacred imperial descent – not to have appreciated the historical fact that much kami worship, especially at lower levels of premodern society, had little or no connection with the priestly role of a Japanese sovereign. Moreover, his second and third characteristics ("reality-ism" and "brightness–purity-ism") should be reconsidered and reformulated from a broader perspective than that of kami worship. Nevertheless, Muraoka's studies stimulated and informed later thought on Japanese cultural paradigms, such as the following.

Vitalism

Agreeing with Muraoka that kami belief lies at the very base of Japanese culture but looking at cultural change, as a whole, a few historians have identified a set of old and lasting beliefs tentatively labeled *vitalism*. This paradigm symbolizes a relatively stable field of cultural energy that swirls about the worship of kami for their mysterious power to create, enrich, prolong, or renew any form of life here and now.[25] Early signs of vitalism can be found in female clay figurines

24 Muraoka Tsunetsugu, *Nihon shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1939), pp. 419–68; Delmer M. Brown and James T. Araki, trans., *Studies in Shinto Thought* (Tokyo: Japanese Ministry of Education, publishing for UNESCO, 1964), pp. 1–50.

25 This paradigm was considered in a paper delivered at the Second (1968) International Conference for Shinto Studies held in Claremont, Calif., by Delmer M. Brown, "Kami, Death, and

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(*dogū*) and phallic rods (*bo*) excavated from preagricultural Jōmon sites and thought to have been used in magic rites for benefiting human life.[26] In the later Yayoi period that began with the introduction of rice agriculture around 300 B.C., divine beings (probably identified quite early as kami) came to be worshiped through prayers (*norito*) and festivals (*matsuri*) that would induce a clan's kami to use its life-creating and life-enriching power to produce a bounteous rice crop.[27] Indeed, the vitalistic flavor of agricultural kami worship is still strong in present-day Japan, not only in remote villages, but also at city shrines where people turn to spiritual power for good health and monetary gain.

Vitalism was explicitly expressed in the word *musubi* (creating or creator). *Musubi* was attached to the names of the two kami that produced the most famous creator kami couple of all: Izanagi and Izanami. After sexual intercourse, Izanagi and Izanami gave birth (*umu*) first to the islands of Japan and then to its seas, rivers, mountains, trees, and grass. Next, according to the creation myth, Izanagi and Izanami produced a kami of the sun (the Sun Goddess), whose descendants were to rule Japan. The Sun Goddess was and still is believed to have both a good (*zenshin*) and a bad (*akujin*) side, but her bad side did not and does not cause death or destroy life; it only temporarily obstructs the bestowal of life-enriching benefits by the good side.[28]

This paradigm is also highlighted by rites intended to remove anything dead or dying (pollution or *tsumi*) from the place of kami worship and from the bodies of kami worshipers. Such an abhorrence of death accounts for the tradition that graveyards and latrines should not be located within the grounds of a kami shrine and that care should be taken to keep the shrine's precincts free of dead or dying plants and animals. Some great shrines, notably the Ise Shrine where

Ancestral Worship," *Proceedings* (English), pp. 169–81 and (Japanese), pp. 170–86. Further implications were explored in Delmer M. Brown, "Shintoism and Japanese Society," *Ajia bunka kenkyū*, no. 6 (December 1972): 51–67. Ishida Ichirō has written several articles in this general area, which are listed in *Kami to Nihon bunka*, pp. 215–16.

26 In searching for the religious meaning of Jōmon figurines, Johannes Maringer compared them with other primitive female statuettes possessing theriomorphic heads. She found a "common psychic structure spanning all oceans and continents." See "Clay Figurines of the Jōmon Period: A Contribution to the History of Ancient Religion in Japan," *History of Religions* 4 (November 1974): 129–39.

27 Several scholars have studied connections between kami worship and social change, but Harada Toshiaki's contributions have been especially important. See his *Nihon kodai shūkyō: zōho kaiteiban:* Revised and enlarged ed. (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1970), and his *Nihon kodai shisō* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1972).

28 Ishida, *Kami to Nihon bunka*, pp. 158–9.

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the Sun Goddess is worshiped, have for centuries been completely rebuilt every twenty years, without reusing even one piece of wood from the old building. Presumably this practice is based on the ancient and enduring belief that old wood, having been subjected to organic decay, blocks the bestowal of the kami's blessing. After all visible pollution has been removed from the shrine and its grounds, invisible pollution is removed by rites that include *misogi* (the removal of pollution by immersion in water) and *harai* (waving a sacred implement in front of whatever is to be purified).

The abhorrence of death – the dark side of vitalism – is further underscored by the care that is consistently given to keeping kami and kami rites uncontaminated by funerals, memorial rites, and prayers for life after death. Although earlier distinguished scholars (especially Yanagita Kunio) held that kami worship is essentially ancestor worship, an increasingly large number of modern historians – including the author of Chapter 6 – see significance in the following observations: that no known ancient burial mound ever became the site of an ancient kami sanctuary, that no early myth ever identified a kami as a deceased human being, and that no early myth ever tells us that an ancestral kami really died.[29] As early as the seventh century the imperial clan began honoring its clan kami (the Sun Goddess) as its founding ancestor, but the Sun Goddess was not a deceased ancestor.

At a somewhat later date, one kami (Hachiman) was worshiped as the soul of a deceased king (Ōjin), but Ōjin had died several centuries before his enshrinement, and his undying soul – not his corpse – was enshrined as Hachiman. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the souls of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) were enshrined as kami, and in modern times the souls of other prominent individuals – such as Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) – have been enshrined. But what resides in the sacred objects of worship (the *shintai*) of those shrines are their living souls. Important rites held at every shrine – even at a shrine honoring the soul of a person who once lived and died – are centered on requests for benefits in life, here and now.

The abhorrence of death accounts also for a strong and persistent inclination to keep kami worship uncontaminated by Buddhist teach-

29 Some kami, according to myth, did die (such as Izanami and Sarutahiko), but it is their living souls that are worshiped. At the Tsubaki Grand Shrine, a stone coffin, said to have been the one in which Sarutahiko was buried, is located beside the path to the main sanctuary. But the sacred object of worship (the *shintai*) is not Sarutahiko's dead body but something in which Sarutahiko's living soul is believed to reside.

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ings on such subjects as the elimination of attachments to life, rebirth in some Buddhist heaven after death, and memorial rites for the souls of the deceased. Legal procedures compiled early in the tenth century stipulate that various Buddhist terms – including the word *Buddha* – be banned from kami worship at shrines. Although respected studies delineate several stages of Shinto–Buddhist fusion in ancient times, and the two faiths obviously influenced each other in diverse and deep ways, every sanctuary was clearly identified as either a kami shrine or a Buddhist temple. Even today, the head of a family maintains both a kami shelf (*kamidana*) where blessings for this life are sought and a Buddhist altar (*butsudan*) where deceased members of the family are honored, but the two are kept apart. The most basic beliefs of kami worship (its vitalism) were never seriously undermined by Shakyamuni's teaching that enlightenment could be achieved only by rejecting attachments to life. Thus Buddhist scholars such as Watanabe Shōkō concluded that the original message of Shakyamuni (the historic Buddha) was never widely accepted by the Japanese people.[30] Even the most popular Buddhist movements of today stress promises of health, wealth, and happiness in this life, leaving the distinct impression that vitalism – and not what Ienaga calls the "negation doctrine" (*hitei no ronri*) – has been dominant in Japan's "new religions."

Although vitalism has deep religious roots and has been articulated in religious terms, its influence is reflected in Japanese culture as a whole. Historians detect, for example, a vitalistic tone in their country's ancient art and literature, as well as in early expressions of historical consciousness (see Chapter 10). Arising from life-affirming belief and behavior, vitalism was therefore a powerful nonphysical force affecting Japanese attitudes in all areas of life in ancient times and in later periods as well.

Priestism

Muraoka's first characteristic of kami belief and action ("imperial country-ism") points to another early and lasting paradigm, one referred to here as *priestism*. At the base of Japan's extensive and enduring system of priestly rule – ranging from village heads at the bottom of society to emperors and empresses at the top – lies the common

30 Shōkō Watanabe, *Japanese Buddhism: A Critical Appraisal* (Tokyo: Kokusai bunka shinkokai, 1968), pp. 53–110.

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assumption that any community (village, kingdom, kingdom federation, or state) approaches its particular tutelary kami mainly through a ritually selected charismatic individual.

According to ethnological studies carried out by Harada Toshiaki and others, the priest of an ancient agricultural community was probably selected annually by a ceremonial "drawing of kami straws" (*kamifuda*), a rite still performed in shrines in remote mountain villages. In later Yayoi times when clans and small kingdoms were formed, chieftains and kings continued to perform priestly roles for life and as a hereditary right. Even today, most kami festivals at all levels of society are conducted by priests who have inherited their positions and expect to perform their priestly functions indefinitely. Likewise, the founder of nearly every modern "new religion" (whether of a kami or Buddha persuasion) is commonly succeeded by a person who retains that high sacral post as long as he or she wishes.

Priestism was (and still is) strengthened by a Buddhist patriarchal tradition that distinguishes one temple from another by patriarchal line. A line emerged and was extended as every temple head (patriarch) transmitted his inherited version of Buddhist truth to his favorite disciple who, in turn, transmitted it to his successor, generation after generation. Buddhist patriarchalism was firmly established in those continental kingdoms and empires through which Buddhism spread northward and eastward to Japan. But after this religion was introduced to Japan, its priestism was reinforced by (and reinforced) the native practice of worshiping kami through a succession of sacred (kami-possessing) hereditary priests. (Note, however, that the two priestly modes, one native and the other foreign, exerted their influence on Japanese society differently: Kami priestism moved *upward* from village heads at the bottom of society, and Buddhist priestism moved *downward* from rulers at the top.) Chief priests at important Buddhist temples were expected – even ordered – to conduct worship in ways that would benefit the ruler and his family and would protect him from natural disaster and military defeat. Thus political leaders not only performed priestly functions at kami-honoring festivals but also patronized Buddha worship, appointing priests as temple heads, assigning them political responsibilities, and awarding them ranks within the imperial order.

Before the close of the ancient period in 784, priestism gained further strength from the increased power and prestige of the Buddhist priests who headed great temple complexes with extensive private estates (*shōen*). And in the later Heian period (784 to 1180), this phe-

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nomenon was strengthened by Buddhist abbots of powerful new sects (the Tendai and the Shingon) who administered huge temple systems, commanded large armies, and held high court ranks and offices. And after the thirteenth-century rise of popular Buddhism (focused on the spread of the Zen, Pure Land, and Nichiren sects), priestism was fortified and expanded by priests who headed complex temple systems patronized by military regimes and townsmen. As networks of popular Buddhist temples gained political and military power – at times seizing and maintaining control of whole provinces – this priestly influence spread rapidly to towns and villages at lower levels of society and in widely scattered regions.

Confucianism also added crucial support to priestism, not so much through its own priesthood (although a few Confucian temples were built in ancient times) as through ethical principles that reinforced control at every point in the emperor-headed hierarchy. These principles occupied a key position (along with kami and Buddha worship) in a state ideology that was articulated in the Seventeen Injunctions of 604. Most of these injunctions are studded with Confucian words and phrases enjoining officials (even priestly ones) to honor their superiors and perform duties in a loyal and efficient manner. As is clearly stated in the Confucian Classics (on which instruction in the ancient university system was based), any lower-ranking person (whether son, official, vassal, or imperial subject) was obligated to obey his higher-ranking superior. Thus any leader's control was increased – and priestism was made an even more active field of cultural energy – by teachings that ensured obedience from those standing on lower rungs of the aristocratic ladder.

Priestism became an even more dynamic force because of the increasingly strong hold that Japan's military code (*bushidō*) had on the hearts and minds of vassals and lords throughout a feudal age that emerged around the twelfth century and lasted until the nineteenth. Grounded in Confucian principles revised to place a vassal's loyalty to his lord above a son's obedience (filial piety) to his father, bushido was consistently upheld and glorified in literary tales, dramatic productions, and school books focused on military values. After the seventeenth century, the authority of a feudal lord (*daimyō*) was further strengthened by Neo-Confucian philosophy. A lord's position had already been reinforced by appointments received directly or indirectly from the emperor (the highest kami priest in the land), by prestige gained from his generous patronage of both kami shrines and Buddhist temples, by the stewardship of land yielding income appropriate

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to his particular niche in the feudal order, and by vassal subservience engendered by bushido ethics. But now his status was ideologically justified by officially endorsed Neo-Confucian principles.

Priestism – the influence of charismatic leaders throughout society – continues to leave its imprint on inferior–superior relationships in present-day Japan. American anthropologists recognize the influence of bushido ethics within Japan's working class,[31] and the distinguished Japanese anthropologist Nakane Chie has drawn attention to "vertical relationships" in the whole of Japanese society.[32] The power of the bushido tradition is also implicitly noted in the popular generalization that "bossism" (*oyakobun*) is prevalent in most Japanese institutions. Even foreign vistors are surprised at the authority of Japanese leaders and the deference shown by followers. This is seen in such nontraditional organizations as Christian churches, international business firms, and radical student movements. The effects of priestism can likewise be detected in Japan's Liberal Democratic party, which has retained control of the Diet for most of the years since World War II. The party is made up of cliques headed by charismatic leaders who hold their positions indefinitely, even a scandal is not likely to dislodge them. Thus priestism – deeply rooted in ancient religious beliefs and practices and continuously nourished by military ideals and Confucian ethics – has become a powerful and enduring field of cultural energy, a paradigm that helps the historian see and assess the importance of charismatic leadership in all areas of Japanese life, especially in ancient times.

Particularism

Another paradigm, referred to here as *particularism*, stands poles apart from the universalism of such world religions as Buddhism and Christianity. Particularism revolves about the consistent and enduring belief that every kami (whether of the folk or tutelary variety) bestows divine blessings on its particular community in accordance with that community's particular needs.

At the core of this paradigm lies the old and lasting belief that every kami (even though invisible) resides in one particular sacred object (a

31 Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), pp. 43–75.

32 Nakane Chie, *Tateshakai no ningen kankei* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1967).

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kami body or *shintai*) located at one particular place.[33] This belief permeates the worship of folk kami (without formal shrines) as well as the worship of tutelary kami who guard all living creatures within clearly defined areas around their particular shrines. The *shintai* of a folk kami is commonly an interesting rock or tree, but that of a tutelary kami is usually something more grand: a nearby mountain, a strategic offshore island, a mysterious jewel (*magatama*), an exotic mirror, a bronze sword or bell, a famous statue, or a scroll painted by a distinguished calligrapher. But whatever it may be, it is a valued symbol of special importance to the community residing in that particular place.

The particularity of kami worship is further highlighted by the sacredness of land near or around a *shintai*. The sacred area of a folk kami may extend to points no more than a few feet from its *shintai*, but around the *shintai* of a tutelary kami it is more extensive, including (1) the clearly marked grounds of the shrine where the *shintai* has been placed and (2) the clearly marked area outside the shrine where members of the community live. The former, always more sacred, is set apart from the community's land by a sacred fence. One can usually spot a shrine from some distance because it is normally surrounded by an unspoiled growth of trees where one finds a kami gate (*torii* or "bird-perching" [places]) made of two pillars topped by two beams. The sacredness of shrine grounds is disclosed, first of all, by the special care given to preventing contamination by death-connected pollution (*tsumi*). Anyone entering the grounds is sure to be impressed by its neatness and cleanliness and to become aware of gradations of sacredness (particularity) determined by proximity to the *shintai*. When moving from the *torii* at the entrance and approaching the kami hall (*shinden*) at the rear where the *shintai* has been placed, a person passes through increasingly sacred points in space before reaching a spot beyond which only a high priest may proceed.

The space occupied by the community around the grounds of a shrine is also sacred because of the age-old belief that all people, animals, and plants living there are guarded by one particular tutelary kami. Although villagers have always believed that their kami dis-

33 The nature and power of this paradigm were the subject of a paper presented at the First (1965) International Conference on Shinto Studies held in Claremont, Calif., by Delmer M. Brown, "Particularism of Shinto," *Proceedings* (in Japanese), pp. 9–16. Cultural implications were considered in a lecture delivered by him at the International Christian University in Tokyo, "Shintoism and Japanese Society," pp. 51–67.

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penses its blessings (if treated properly) to any living creature within the village limits, they generally assume that their kami's blessings will not be bestowed on anyone or anything outside the village. Ancient myths reveal that clan boundaries, in some cases at least, were guarded by certain kami, but no one seems to have believed (with notable modern exceptions[34]) that any kami ever exercised its divine power outside its particular area.

Territorial particularity emerged in ancient times at three geographical levels: the village, the region, and the state. The oldest and most basic kami-guarded territory has always been the village. Its emergence – after the introduction and spread of wet-rice agriculture and the use of iron approximately three centuries before the time of Christ – came when farmers in the neighborhood of a common source of water relied on one kami to protect them against droughts, storms, epidemics, and predatory neighbors. Then a second level appeared as civilization progressed: when clans worshiping their own clan kami came to control a number of contiguous villages in a single region. Clan chieftains (*ujigami*) not only administered clan affairs but also functioned as the chief priests in the worship of clan kami, administering (like the heads of subject villages) both secular and sacral affairs. A clan chieftain did not stamp out the religious beliefs and practices of conquered villages but insisted that his authority be recognized and ritually affirmed by everyone in his domain.

The third level was reached when one powerful clan gained control over other clans and set up first a clan federation and then the centralized Yamato kingdom in central Japan. The dominant clan chieftain (referred to in Yamato times as the "great king" or *ōkimi*) treated his subject clans (and their clan kami) in the same way that clan chieftains had treated villages and village kami at the second level. Thus a funnel-shaped territorial order had appeared, one that – from a commoner's point of view – extended upward and outward from the village below to the region and kingdom above.

Although early kami beliefs and practices changed considerably through the centuries, arising from interaction not only with worship

34 Although the Tsubaki Grand Shrine (see n. 29) is a very old tutelary shrine, a branch was established in Stockton, California, in 1987, far from the particular area long guarded by Sarutahiko. The chief priest of the Tsubaki Grand Shrine, Yamamoto Yukitaka, is clearly aware that there has been a sharp break with tradition, as revealed in his statement that "[the way of kami] is now taking us on new pathways that Shinto has never trod before. . . . Let us join hands and hearts in the way of Kami, the way the divine in the universe has given us to discover, and realize the highest and best of which mankind is capable – a world of peace, truth, justice, and freedom." See Yukitaka Yamamoto, *Kami no michi: Way of Kami* (Stockton, Calif.: Tsubaki American Publications, 1987), pp. 60, 101.

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at different levels but also with imported faiths, the effects of spatial particularity at these three different levels persist. No matter where an individual believer (*ujiko*) lives, he or she still participates in village, regional, and national festivals. Participation does not depend on conversion to one kami or another but rather on the location of the believer's residence.

Particularism is also manifested in the old and enduring belief that each kami – whether of the folk or tutelary variety and whether worshiped by a village, region, or state – exercises its mysterious power in response to the needs of its particular community of believers. This helps one understand why the prayers, rituals, and myths of a fishing village differ from those of a farming village and why even the believers of neighboring agricultural villages – facing differences of terrain, soil, and weather – worship their kami in different ways. As new needs arose in later times, kami beliefs and practices were altered accordingly, and more quickly in the upper layers of society. After the introduction of Buddhism and Confucianism in the sixth century, for example, native kami beliefs, intermingled with imported faiths, continued as the basic ingredient of an ideology serving to unify and integrate the state, a process moving downward in society. In medieval times, too, the worship of kami (especially the ancestral kami of military clans) was used to unite feudal domains, although the ideology of that day was deeply colored by Confucian principles, military values, and Buddhist "reformation" teachings. Before World War II, ancient myths and rituals of shrines honoring the ancestral kami of the imperial clan (the Sun Goddess) became sources of strength for governmental attempts to reinforce and popularize loyalty to the country's particularly sacred and unique emperor. It was therefore through and around kami symbols, myths, and beliefs that an intense identity, referred to in those years as *ultranationalism*, was generated.

The postwar constitution, however, separated politics from religion, making it illegal for the state to use kami beliefs for stirring up feelings of loyalty to Japan's particular emperor and "nation body" (*kokutai*). Moreover, secularization – fed by spectacular economic growth, a new educational emphasis on universal values, and an "internationalization" that draws attention away from what is uniquely Japanese – has induced some Japanese to say that their country no longer needs an emperor and to deny that they have any special interest in their country's particular religious tradition. But centuries of stressing the uniqueness of groups, especially those that have their own tutelary kami (the village, the clan, and the state), has left a legacy of "groupism" that is

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recognized and studied by scholars in various disciplines. Doi Takeo (a psychiatrist) developed the thesis that dependence (*amae*) is vitally important to understanding the Japanese mentality;[35] Nakamura Hajime (a Buddhist historian studying Eastern ways of thinking) wrote that the way that Japanese think is marked by "the tendency to emphasize a limited social nexus";[36] Nakane Chie (an anthropologist) emphasized the importance of placeness (*ba*) in Japanese society;[37] and Yamamoto Shichihei (a commentator) claimed that whenever Japanese people assemble for a specific purpose, nothing gets done unless they turn themselves into "a virtual blood-kin group."[38] Anyone trying to analyze any aspect of modern-day Japanese life thus is likely to conclude that this cultural phenomenon – associated with "groupism" but identified here as particularism – must be taken into account.

The three paradigms discussed here, and others not yet worked out, are useful for historical analysis, as they represent relatively stable fields of cultural energy (physical and spiritual) that have shaped and colored Japanese life from ancient times to the present. By recognizing their power and realizing that each has been strengthened by interaction with the other two, we obtain models that help us measure the depth of historical currents, the rapidity of their flow, and the extent to which they intermingle.

GREAT WAVES OF CHANGE

The results of research in several disciplines, carried out from broad perspectives and based on rigorous analyses of Japanese experience as a whole, make it possible to see four massive waves of change that swept over Japan, fundamentally altering the character of life after the introduction of agricultural and metallurgical techniques in the third century B.C. The remainder of this Introduction will therefore attempt to show, briefly and incompletely, how secular and sacred sources of energy interactively account for these four waves or historical periods.

The full impact of the interlocking forces that produced these waves can not be seen or imagined without first gaining some sense of how

35 Doi Takeo, *The Anatomy of Dependence*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1971), p. 17.

36 Nakamura Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India–China–Tibet–Japan*, revised English trans. Philip P. Weiner (Honolulu: East–West Center Press, 1964), pp. 407–530.

37 Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 1–22.

38 Quoted in Jared Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun: A Critical View of the "Japanese Miracle"* (New York: Morrow, 1983), p. 72.

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relatively stagnant and primitive life was in earlier years. During the first ninety thousand years of the stone age, only small ripples were caused by the invention and use of more effective stone tools and weapons. After about 7500 B.C., somewhat bigger ripples were made by the manufacture and use of clay pots for storing and cooking food. But throughout that very long preagricultural age, human life continued to be sustained almost exclusively by fishing, hunting, and gathering wild nuts and fruit. People then had no iron tools for acquiring and preparing food, no knowledge of writing and reading, no ruling class, and very little social differentiation. Only after they had learned how to grow rice in flooded fields and to use iron tools and weapons did they move rapidly toward civilization. This volume is therefore devoted largely to the tag end of Japan's ancient past: to the millennium known as the "ancient age" that began around 300 B.C. and ended with the removal of the capital from Nara in A.D. 784. (See Chronology in front pages of this volume.)

Yayoi ferment (ca. 300 B.C. to A.D. 250)

The late but rather abrupt spread of rice-growing and iron-making techniques released economic, military, and religious energy that produced the first great wave of change: the six centuries of ferment known as the Yayoi period. Archaeologists have uncovered three major types of evidence for the study of life in these years: (1) pottery (Yayoi is the name of the place in Tokyo where pots of that period were first found), (2) burial remains, and (3) bronze implements and remnants of iron tools and weapons (see Chapters 1 and 5).

Realizing that improved methods of producing food and fending off enemies made Yayoi life radically different, historians have long wondered why the new techniques reached Japan at that particular time. Okazaki points out in Chapter 5 that by the fourth century B.C., Chinese generals were commanding soldiers equipped with iron weapons enabling them to establish China's first empire (the Ch'in) in 221 B.C. The dynastic history of the Former Han (206 B.C. to A.D. 8) reports that a lord of northern China invaded Korea in the early years of that dynasty, set up a kingdom in Korea that soon expanded his control to most of the peninsula, and also introduced agriculture, silk weaving, and law. But archaeologists have found evidence of rice production in Korea much earlier than that (around 1000 B.C.) and of the use of iron weapons as early as the fourth century B.C. Nevertheless, studies in various fields leave little doubt that around 300 B.C. Korea

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was subjected to a "continuous penetration of Chinese political, military, and economic power" and that by 108 B.C. it was dominated by three Chinese commanderies (Lo-lang, Chen-fan, and Lin-t'un).[39] A Chinese cultural explosion followed by aftershocks in surrounding states thus opened channels for the flow of advanced agricultural and metalworking techniques to lands as far east and north as Japan.

The rather sudden spread of these techniques to the Japanese islands has long been attributed to Korean immigrants, but no agreement has been reached on the timing, size, and makeup of the migrations. Suzuki Hisashi's postwar studies of skeletal remains led him to conclude that the Yayoi people – who had a larger physical stature that he thought was due to improved living conditions – were Jōmon descendants, not Korean immigrants. The latest explanation, however, is that it was Korean immigrants who brought new farming and toolmaking methods to Japan, that these immigrants were leaders of remarkable Yayoi development, that descendants of earlier Jōmon people adopted the new methods, and that as time passed the two people were gradually fused.[40]

Three early Chinese references to Japan indicate that the introduction of agriculture and the use of metal was followed by extremely rapid social change. The first reference is a brief note in the dynastic history of the Former Han stating that "the Japanese people (the *Wajin*) are located in the Lo-lang seas, have more than 100 states, and are periodically received [at the Lo-lang court]." The second, dated A.D. 57 and included in the dynastic history of the Later Han (A.D. 25–220), tells about a gold seal being presented to the king of the Japanese state of Na. The third is a surprisingly detailed description of a Yamatai kingdom that had more than seventy thousand households ruled by hereditary queens and kings. This can be found in the history of Wei (A.D. 221–65) compiled by a man who died in A.D. 297.[41]

The first of these reports suggests that kingdoms strong enough to send missions to Lo-lang in Korea had appeared in Japan before the time of Christ, a conclusion weakened, however, by uncertainty as to whether the *wajin* were residents of southern Korea or Japan. Suzuki Yasutami is inclined to think that the *wajin* lived in both places and

39 Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 14–16.

40 Yoshie, *Rekishi no akebono*, pp. 48–51.

41 The last two references to Japan in early Chinese dynastic histories were translated into English by Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (South Pasadena, Calif.: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), pp. 1–6.

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that other Koreans had migrated to Japan in those early years of the Yayoi period.[42]

The second report shows that a kingdom sufficiently powerful to send missions to China had emerged in Kyushu by the first century A.D. The veracity of this report has been corroborated by the discovery, in Kyushu, of a gold seal thought to be the very one mentioned in the dynastic history of the Later Han. It was found on the island of Shiga (in the present-day city of Fukuoka) in 1784, more than seventeen hundred years after its reported presentation. On the seal are inscribed Chinese characters that read: "[From] Han [to the] king of Na." For the last two hundred years Japanese scholars have debated the seal's authenticity, questioning especially the name of the king's "country." Many think it was Na, but others favor Yamato. A consensus seems to have emerged that the seal really was made in China, that Han emperors customarily presented such seals to kings whose territories were located beyond the empire's borders, and that some Japanese kingdom was in contact with the Chinese court during the middle years of the Yayoi period.[43]

Three different reasons are given for the seal's burial. First, it was hidden after an invasion by a neighboring kingdom. Second, it was buried in a dolmen (*shisekibo*) with the body of a deceased Na king. Third, it was buried as a sacred treasure of the island's shrine (the Shiga no Umi jinja). Naoki Kōjirō finds weaknesses in each theory and proposes the following set of probabilities: (1) After the seal had been received by the king of Na, civil war broke out and the seal fell into the hands of a chieftain based on the island of Shiga; (2) with the passage of some time, Na came under the control of a kingdom bordering on the Genkai Sea; and (3) because the seal's function as a symbol of Na authority was lost, it was made a sacred object of worship (*shintai*) at the Shiga no Umi Shrine and was buried in the ground for safekeeping.[44] Most scholars agree or assume that the seal symbolized the secular and sacral dimensions of a leader's authority.

Thousands of Yayoi period bronzes (mirrors, spears, swords, and

42 Suzuki Yasutami, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei to Yamato ōken," in Hara Hidesaburo and Sato Sōjun, eds., *Genshi kodai*, vol. 1 of *Kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1984), pp. 205–10; and Gari Ledyard, "Galloping Along with the Horse-Riders: Looking for the Founders of Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1 (1975): 217–54.

43 Naoki Kōjirō, *Wakoku no tanjō*, vol. 1 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1973), pp. 225–30. A similar seal was granted to the king of Tien in 109 B.C., and this too was discovered by archaeologists. See Yü Ying-shih, "Han foreign relations," in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Ch'in and Han Empires. 221 B.C. – A.D. 220*, vol. 1 of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 459.

44 Naoki, *Wakoku no tanjō*, p. 227.

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bells) made in China, or patterned after those that were, have been found at sites in widely scattered regions of Japan. These bronzes were acquired, it is thought, by religiopolitical rulers (kings) who valued them as symbols of their power. Studies of the dating and distribution of bronzes have enabled historians to see the outlines of change in Japan's early relations with continental courts, to trace the course of political centralization, and to appreciate a continuing preoccupation with sacral authority. (See Map 1.2, Chapter 1.)

Although some of the early bronzes may have been used as weapons (especially the swords called *ka*), most seem to have had little or no practical value. The mirrors might have been used to see what could not be seen directly, but the discovery that the backs of many were well worn suggests that they had been hung around the necks of ritualists (shamans) as symbols of their mysterious power. Such an interpretation is consistent with the prominence of mirrors in later imperial myths and with the confirmed fact that the sacred object of worship (the *shintai*) at Japan's leading shrine (Ise) is a bronze mirror. The symbolic character of bronze weapons is also underscored by the observation that many are too big and clumsy for effective use as weapons. Furthermore, the bronze bells often had no clappers, suggesting that they were not valued as articles that could make marvelous sounds.[45]

The distribution of Chinese bronzes found in Yayoi sites presents this puzzling question: Why was no bronze bell included among the three sacred imperial symbols (a mirror, a sword, and a jewel) of Yamato, the kingdom that arose in central Japan where bronze bells have been found? For years, archaeologists have realized that Japan of the Yayoi period had two distinct cultural spheres: one in the west where large numbers of bronze mirrors and weapons were accumulated, and another in central and eastern regions where bronze bells were prized.[46] It is surmised that the two spheres were linked with the continent differently: that whereas kingdoms in the west were in touch with China and Korea through ports located along the shores of Japan's southern island of Kyushu, those in the north and east were in contact with the mainland through ports along the Japan Sea, probably as far north and east as the Noto peninsula. Because the predecessors of the Yamato kings had

45 Naoki has written an excellent summary of the distribution and dating of Yayoi graves and ceremonial bronzes: See his "Haka to matsuri seidōki," in *Wakoku no tanjō*, pp. 174–205.

46 For a map showing the distribution of Yayoi bronzes, see *Nihon rekishi chizu* supplementary vol., of Rekishi daijiten henshū iinkai, ed., *Nihon rekishi daijiten* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1986), map 5, insert 2.

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come from the west (as ancient myths proclaim), they may well have favored mirrors, swords, and spears – not bronze bells.

Obviously iron ore was needed for making agricultural tools and military weapons but neither written accounts nor archaeological finds tell us much about the importation of ore. Yoshie Akio's sociological study of ancient Japan led him to write that toward the end of the second century A.D., Yamatai had achieved supremacy over some thirty kingdoms by controlling access to Korean ore.[47] But Yoshie did not have enough evidence to be specific about the nature and volume of iron imports. The large number of iron tools and weapons excavated from Yayoi sites, the near absence of iron ore on the islands of Japan, and references to iron imports in later Yamato times (see Chapter 2) suggest that Yamatai's interest in Korea was based on a continuing demand for iron ore.

What sorts of things did the Japanese send to continental courts in the Yayoi years to obtain valued bronzes and needed iron ore? Possibly Chinese and Korean rulers were so pleased to receive tributary missions from distant lands that they willingly handed over whatever was requested, even if the envoys submitted only token tribute. But a Chinese reference found in the history of the Later Han dynasty (dated A.D. 107) reports that the Japanese sent 160 prisoners of war (*seiko*) as tribute. Realizing that prisoners of war were commonly treated as slaves, Tsunoda Ryusaku rendered *seiko* as "slaves" when translating this passage into English.[48] Again, we do not have enough evidence for more than a hazy notion of how many prisoners of war (or slaves) the Japanese sent to China in Yayoi times, but it is assumed that tribute of this sort made it easier for the Japanese to acquire the bronze implements and iron ore they wanted. Although 160 is a surprisingly large number of *seiko* to be sent by a single mission, Naoki Kōjirō concluded that Japanese military conquests, at home or abroad, did not produce a great number of prisoners and that Japan had not developed a slave system nearly as extensive as that of ancient Greece or Rome.[49]

The formation of the Yamatai federation of kingdoms has long been identified with a centralization process that led, a few centuries later, to the birth of the Japanese state. But only in recent times have scholars used comparative studies in the sociology of religion to see deeper meaning in the following reference to Queen Himiko of Yamatai, a

47 Yoshie, *Rekishi no akebono*, pp. 63–73.
48 Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 2.
49 Naoki, *Wakoku no tanjō*, p. 230.

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paragraph found in the aforementioned Chinese account of the third century A.D.:

For a number of years, there was no ruler. Then a woman named Himiko appeared. Remaining unmarried, she occupied herself with magic and sorcery and bewitched the populace. Thereupon they placed her on the throne. She kept one thousand female attendants, but few people saw her. There was only one man who was in charge of her wardrobe and meals and [he] acted as the medium of communication. She resided in a palace surrounded by towers and stockade[s], with the protection of armed guards.[50]

Whereas earlier historians tended to think of Queen Himiko as a shaman who had delegated the handling of secular affairs to a male relative, recent scholars – noting strong evidence of magic practices in the earlier Jōmon period, and symbolizations of secular and sacral authority in the Yamato and post-Yamato periods – have come to see her practice of "magic and sorcery" as highlighting the spiritual side of Japanese sovereignty.

Relating this historical view of Yamatai rulership to the distribution and character of ceremonial items found in Yayoi graves, Yoshie decides that Yamatai (whether this federation of kingdoms was located in Kyushu or central Japan is not yet clear[51]) had been established and maintained principally by the ceremonial power of priestly rulers, not by the physical power of armies and material possessions. He deduced that each kingdom within Yamatai was a community held together by common magic beliefs and practices and that a priestly ruler had delegated military and administrative tasks to one or more assistants. Although there apparently was a distinction between religious and administrative affairs, Yoshie believes that conflicts between kingdoms could have been resolved only by a king or queen who functioned as a conductor of magic rites.[52]

50 Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, pp. 2–3.

51 J. E. Kidder reports that recent archaeological finds at Yoshinogari in Kyushu are being used by some historians to support the claim that Yamatai was located in that area, not in central Japan. Excavations made during the last three years reveal that Yoshinogari is the largest Yayoi site ever found and that it was occupied for the longest period of time. A rather big house surrounded by a moat stands among three hundred pit dwellings. More than two thousand jar burials were found, mostly outside the moat. One Chinese-style mounded tomb about two meters high was found somewhat apart from the other burials; it probably was for a deceased leader. Two bronze daggers and three bronze-mirror fragments were also uncovered. But the village is judged to have reached the peak of its development in the first century A.D., a century or two earlier than the dates given in Chinese reports on Yamatai. Kidder does not feel that these finds weaken his own conclusion that Yamatai was located in central Japan; see report of a paper delivered by J. Edward Kidder at a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Japan, *Bulletin of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, no. 2 (February 1990): 3–6.

52 Yoshie, *Rekishi no akebono*, p. 70.

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The Yamato state (ca. A.D. 250 to 587)

The beginning of the second great wave of historical change is associated with the rise of the kingdom of Yamato in central Japan during the third century A.D. Enjoying the fruits of greater agricultural production and closer contact with strong Korean kingdoms, one Yamato ruler after another enjoyed enough power and wealth to erect a massive burial mound (an "ancient mound" or *kofun*) for his deceased predecessor, usually a father or brother. These impressive burials, together with hundreds of other mounds built for lesser lights, have led historians to refer to these three Yamato centuries as the Burial Mound period.

Although this was a time of spectacular economic growth and political centralization, officials of the Yamato state did not keep written records until the very end of the period. Consequently, these centuries have long been thought of as a rather misty segment of Japan's ancient past. But in recent years archaeologists have unearthed vast amounts of data on Yamato life. By correlating this with archaeological finds in Korea and China, examining what was written about Japan in contemporary Chinese and Korean accounts, and attempting to disentangle myth from the historical facts recorded in Japan's earliest chronicles, scholars of different disciplines are beginning to make out the general outlines of Yamato history. They are now beginning to understand how active foreign relations, greater agricultural productivity, overwhelming military might, and changing forms of kami worship interacted with one another at successive stages of Yamato vigor, expansion, and disruption (see Chapter 2).

Having obtained unmistakable evidence that a strong Yamato state did arise in central Japan during the third century A.D., historians are now asking why this state – much larger and stronger than Yamatai – should have come into existence at that particular time and place. Research by Tsude Hiroshi[53] and others supports the conclusion that this was made possible by an enormous increase in the production of rice. Improved methods of keeping fields flooded during the growing season of the year was then spreading rapidly into areas with alluvial soil, first on the Nara plain and then in outlying regions, and dry-field farming was being developed.[54]

The greater production of food at the beginning of the Yamato period seems to have been largely due to the efforts and methods of

53 See Tsude, "Nōkō shakai no keisei," pp. 117–58. 54 Yoshie, *Rekishi no akebono*, p. 84.

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Korean immigrants. As Yoshie notes, relations with China and Korea were then quite different. In the previous Yayoi period, they had been limited largely to the exchange of envoys and gifts, but in Yamato times they were extended to migrations from, and a wider range of contacts with, strong and independent Korean kingdoms: Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla. Culturally, Yamatai may have lagged two or three centuries behind contemporary Korean Kingdoms, but Yamato seems to have been as strong as Paekche or Silla.[55]

The sudden spurt of agricultural production at the start of the Yamato period was paralleled by greater military and political control over land and people in remote regions of Japan and by the emergence of more complex social institutions. Deceased rulers were then buried in huge keyhole-shape mounds surrounded by small mounds for underlings, and large residences for village chiefs were encircled by huts for commoners. The entire social order was becoming stratified and segmented by (1) lineal groups or clans (*uji*) that dominated the lands and people of entire regions, (2) occupational groups (*be*) that served clan chieftains and the kingdom's rulers by performing services and manufacturing tools and weapons, (3) royal estates (*miyake*) that handed over a large portion of what they produced to the current Yamato king or queen, and (4) provinces (*kuni*) and districts (*agata*) that served as arms of Yamato control. The leaders of all these groups held hereditary ranks (*kurai*) and titles (*kabane*) that were marks of status determined by proximity to the Yamato ruler (see Chapter 2).

As in other kingdoms located on the periphery of advanced cultural centers of the world, the bottom of Yamato society was rather sharply separated from its top. The former consisted mainly of farmers descended from Yayoi period immigrants, whereas the latter were descendants of nonagricultural specialists who had arrived from the continent in Yamato times. Yoshie points out that the thrust of the two types of foreign influence not only affected life differently over time but also ran through Japanese society in opposite directions: Yayoi period influence, flowing from the spread of imported agricultural and metalworking techniques, moved *upward* from the base of society, transforming the whole of Yayoi life, but Yamato period influence, centered on imported administrative and military ideas and institutional forms, radiated *downward* from the top of society, leaving its deepest marks on the life of the elite.[56]

Yoshie observes, in addition, two different modes of control. The

55 Ibid., pp. 80–83, 94. 56 Ibid., pp. 73–76.

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first, a ceremonial mode, was commonly used by local village heads throughout the Yayoi and Yamato periods. The second, a secular mode, was utilized by Yamato kings and queens. Although leaders at both social levels performed ceremonial as well as secular functions, those at the bottom of society exercised their control mainly, in both the Yayoi and Yamato periods, as priests and priestesses who, standing between their communities and their community kami, were primarily agents of kami will and blessing. This ceremonial mode, emerging early and lasting a long time at the village level, was dominant even in the rule of Queen Himiko of Yamatai, as is indicated in the contemporary Chinese account just quoted.

A king of the later Yamato period, on the other hand, seems to have controlled affairs largely through the exercise of physical (military, economic, and political) power. This secular mode is most clearly seen in the fifth-century reign of King Nintoku, who was buried in Japan's largest and most impressive tomb and whose reign is known for its remarkable expansion of control, successful military campaigns to distant regions, and showy diplomatic missions to China. During these years, the secular mode of control seems to have worked its way down to the village level, as is suggested by the archaeological discovery that pit (*tateana*) houses for commoners were being gradually replaced by vertical (*suichoku*) houses built above the ground.[57] Greater material prosperity at the base of society surely made village heads less dependent on the flow of power from popular belief in the village kami.

But Yamato rulers relied on sacral as well as secular modes of control. Even though their military power, material wealth, and political control were spectacular, they still used proportionately large amounts of material and labor to build huge mounds for the burial of deceased predecessors, paid close attention to rites performed at shrines in their hegemonic spheres, and associated themselves with making or revising myths that would sanctify a kami hierarchy headed by their own ancestral kami. Such activity leaves little doubt that the Yamato kings and queens were attempting to sanctify their positions as hereditary agents of the country's most powerful kami.

Soga no Umako's decision not to occupy the throne after emerging victorious from the civil war of 587 – even though he surely knew that successful Chinese rebels had founded new imperial dynasties – suggests that he was well aware of the tradition by which only a direct descendant of Japan's single line of priestly kings was entitled

57 Ibid., p. 90.

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to enthronement, and of the fact that he was head of an immigrant clan associated with the worship of a foreign faith. Nevertheless, two offspring of Soga women were placed on the throne soon after the Soga victory: Emperor Sushun (son of Soga no Iname's daughter) in 588 and Empress Suiko (daughter of another Iname daughter) in 593. These arrangements indicate that Umako thought it best to have this control sanctified by following the ancient *gaiseki* tradition of exercising power as an in-law-relative of the emperor or empress, not by placing himself on the throne.

Century of reform (587 to 710)

Soga no Umako's military victory of 587 was followed by a ground swell of reforms manifested in the enactment of a Chinese-style code of administrative and penal law (the Taihō code) in 701 and the occupation of a grand Chinese-style capital at Heijō (now Nara) in 710. The changes wrought in this century were so rapid and wide-ranging that one is tempted to compare them with reforms that were coupled with the modernization of Japan in the nineteenth century. When trying to understand the post-587 reforms, we notice first that they were adopted at a time when channels of contact with the continent were suddenly opened by two explosive events: the unification of the Chinese empire by the Sui dynasty in 589 and the founding of the T'ang dynasty in 618; and the seizure of control over Japanese state affairs by an immigrant clan, the Soga.

The wave of change that followed was fundamentally different from what had come at the beginning of earlier periods. In Yayoi times, society had been transformed by the introduction of techniques for growing rice and making iron tools and weapons and, in the Yamato years, by a burst of economic and political power generated by sudden increases in agricultural production and the use of new techniques for expanding and maintaining political control. But what made change in the so-called century of reform explosive was the introduction and rapid spread of Chinese high culture: Chinese religious beliefs (Taoism and Buddhism), Chinese ethical teachings (Confucianism), Chinese artistic styles (painting and sculpture), Chinese literary tastes (poetry and history), Chinese architecture (Hōryū-ji), and Chinese law (*ritsuryō* codes).

Buddhism was probably the most important of the several interactive elements of Chinese high culture. After this "world religion" received governmental backing in 587, Buddhist priests and temples

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became agents of a continuous flow of cultural imports that produced what is known as the Asuka enlightenment. The importance of contributions of Buddhist priests and temples to the enlightenment becomes clear when studying developments at three great temple compounds erected after the Soga seizure of control. These were the Asuka-dera built by Soga no Umako (d. 626) and the Shitennō-ji and Hōryū-ji said to have been founded by Prince Shōtoku (574–622). Forty-three other temple compounds were reportedly erected before 624. All these Buddhist institutions – staffed by hundreds of priests and nuns trained in the teachings, symbolism, and arts of Chinese Buddhism – were channels for an outpouring of Chinese cultural influence that deeply colored the religious, political, and social life of the Japanese people.

Commentaries on three Buddhist sutras said to have been written by Prince Shōtoku show that some Japanese were then serious students of Buddhist scripture and may well have been committed to the practice of Buddhist precepts. But a number of scholars believe that Buddha was then treated like a native kami and that most Buddhist rituals were forms of magic performed mainly for the benefit of patron clans. Indeed, the linkage of temple compound to clan chieftain accounts for the tendency to describe pre-645 Buddhist institutions as clan temples (*ujidera*) and to see that they were valued primarily for their impressive symbolizations of clan authority.

Whereas the immigrant clans were the principal founders and patrons of Buddhist temples, the native clans – more closely affiliated with the current emperor or empress than were the immigrant clans – apparently continued to obtain and exercise sacral authority as conductors of kami ritual. This polarity between the Buddha-worshiping foreign clans and the kami-worshiping native ones has been clouded somewhat by what early chronicles say about the Buddhist activities of Prince Shōtoku and Empress Suiko. Reports of the prince's deep involvement in the study and practice of the foreign faith certainly undergird his fame as the father of Japanese Buddhism. But supporters of the polarity thesis cannot help but wonder whether chronicle sources, the extant versions of which were compiled after the Soga had been ejected from their seats of power in 645, did not exaggerate the prince's support of Buddhism and neglect the belief that an emperor was, above all, the land's highest kami priest.

Feeling that the prince was acting and thinking like a person slated for enthronement, some historians have concluded that the prince propounded an ideology of Japanese sovereignty that made a ruler the

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high priest of kami worship and also the chief patron of Buddhism. Outlines of such an ideology, reinforced with Confucian principles, come down to us in the Seventeen Injunctions of 604, which may have been compiled by the prince himself. Although the Soga chieftains saw advantages in having their control sanctioned by an empress who was the high priestess of kami worship, they were apparently unwilling to share Buddhist patronage with the imperial clan. Accordingly, the enthronement of Prince Shōtoku's son was opposed by Soga leaders after the death of Empress Suiko in 628 and again after the death of Emperor Jomei in 641. Only when the Soga were ousted in 645 was the emperor placed high above the practitioners of both faiths, becoming the chief patron of Buddhism and continuing as the high priest of kami worship.

Imperial edicts issued immediately after the coup of 645 state that a Japanese sovereign should perform both spiritual roles, just as Prince Shōtoku had advocated. Connections between the Great Reforms of 645 and the Seventeen Injunctions of 604 are disclosed in the report that when ministers of the new administration were assembled and asked to swear an oath of allegiance to Emperor Kōtoku, their oath's first sentence carried the same message found in Article 3 of the earlier injunctions: "Just as heaven overspreads and earth upholds, there is only one imperial way."[58]

Threatened by an expanding Chinese empire that was allied with the increasingly strong Korean kingdom of Silla, the reformers moved quickly to strengthen imperial control over both sacral and secular affairs. In addition to following the Chinese practice of reinforcing imperial authority with an ideological mix of three elements (in Japan the three were kami worship [Shintoism], Buddhism, and Confucianism), they moved to increase the emperor's physical power. Article 1 of the famous Four-Article Edict, issued on the first day of the first month of 646, called for direct imperial control of the country's land and people. The three other articles dealt with arrangements that gradually transformed the old clan order into a Chinese-like state system administered by officials appointed by, and made responsible to, the emperor.[59]

For about four years, these reformers were actively engaged in erecting a strong imperial state along Chinese lines. But much of their energy and resources was spent on extensive military preparations

58 *Nihon shoki* Taika 1 (645) 6/19, NKBT 68.270–1; and *Nihon shoki* Suiko 12 (604) 1/1, NKBT 68.181–4; Aston, 2.197 and 2.129.

59 *Nihon shoki* Taika 2 (646) 1/1, NKBT 68.280–3; Aston 2.209–9.

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against a possible T'ang invasion of Japan. Allied with the Korean kingdom of Silla, the Chinese did plan to destroy Paekche, the Korean kingdom with which Japan had had close ties. As early as 651, some Japanese officials advocated preparations for war against Silla; in 653 the crown prince (the future Emperor Tenji) left a new imperial palace at Naniwa on the Inland Sea for a safer place in the region of Asuka; in 658 the Arima incident erupted over a succession dispute and disagreement about how to deal with the Korean problem; in 660 T'ang and Silla jointly attacked Paekche, capturing Paekche's capital and forcing its king to surrender; in 663 a Japanese naval force, said to be made up of four hundred ships sent to support a Paekche restoration movement, was virtually wiped out; and in 668 the state of Koguryŏ (like Paekche) was subjugated by the combined forces of T'ang and Silla.

Some members of Japan's imperial court, convinced that Japan was the next kingdom slated for conquest, pressed the government to strengthen defenses against invasion. And feverish attention was given to erecting forts all the way from islands off the western shore of Kyushu to mountains near the capital in central Japan (see Chapter 3).

Meanwhile officials were also giving close attention to plans for building a strong bureaucratic state (empire) modeled on that of T'ang China. In 667 the capital was moved from Asuka to a more defensible position at Ōtsu on the southwestern shore of Lake Biwa, and in 668 an imperial order called for the compilation of a Chinese-style code of administrative law (*ryō*). The death of Emperor Tenji in 671 was followed by a bitter succession dispute that led to the civil war of 672 (the Jinshin no ran) from which Tenji's brother Temmu emerged victor and emperor. Historians are inclined to agree that Temmu enjoyed far greater control than Tenji did, a conclusion based on the observation that whereas Tenji had been supported by a number of strong clans, Temmu was backed by smaller clans in outlying regions. Because no clan or clan group was sufficiently strong to influence court decisions after Temmu's time, control by occupants of the throne after 672 was not seriously threatened until the middle of the eighth century. Temmu and his immediate successors were therefore gradually able to weaken the old "clan-title system" (*ujikabane seido*) and to set up a "legal system" (*ritsuryō sei*) similar to that of T'ang China.[60]

As Temmu and his immediate successors chipped away at the clans' independence, they made many clan leaders contented officials of the

60 Modern scholars also refer to it as a despotic "imperial system" (*tennō sei*). For an outline of the bureaucratic structure created by the Taihō code promulgated in 702, see Chapter 4.

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new bureaucratic order. Chieftains selected for appointments were expected not only to carry out their secular duties but also to perform priestly functions in an emerging shrine system. Major ceremonies at clan shrines were beginning to take on the form of imperial rites held at the time of a Daijōsai, customarily celebrated after 691 whenever a new emperor or empress was (and is) enthroned.[61]

Interdependence between a sovereign's secular and sacral functions was made eminently clear by the state's new administrative structure in which two great councils of roughly equal status were placed directly under the emperor: the Council of State (Daijōkan) that handled secular affairs, and the Council of Kami Affairs (Jingikan) that presided over kami affairs. The former was made up of eight ministries (Central Affairs, Personnel, Civil Affairs, Popular Affairs, War, Justice, Treasury, and the Imperial Household), and the latter was made responsible for appointing and promoting priests, making decisions on the form and content of kami rites, and establishing standards for offerings made at different shrines at successive times of the year.

Buddhist affairs, the second wing of Japan's bifurcated religious system, were not assigned to a separate council but to a Bureau of Buddhist Priests and Aliens (Gemba-ryō) within the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Why were Buddhist affairs relegated to a bureau within one of the ministries and kami affairs not? Late-seventh-century reformers undoubtedly felt, in spite of increasing official support for Buddhist temples, that kami worship was the stronger arm of the two-winged religious system. They were undoubtedly aware that the conduct of kami rites had always been a basic function of Japanese sovereigns and that the position of every new sovereign was ritually sanctified and justified by affirmations of direct descent from the highest-ranking kami of the land. They apparently understood that the contemporary phrase "unity of ritual and politics" (*saisei ittchi*[62]) expressed a basic concept of Japanese sovereignty.

61 A classic study is that by D. C. Holtom *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies with an Account of the Imperial Regalia*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1972). Three more recent studies are Robert S. Ellwood's *The Feast of Kingship: Accession Ceremonies in Ancient Japan* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1973); Mayumi Tsunetada's *Daijōsai* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1988); and Felicia G. Bock's "The Enthronement Rites: The Text of the Engishiki, 927," *Monumenta Nipponica* 45 (Autumn 1990): 307–37.

62 The first character (*sai*) in the word *saisei* ("ritual and politics") is the sinified equivalent of the old Japanese word *matsurigoto*. References to *matsurigoto* in ancient chronicles and documents lead scholars to conclude that it meant something like "the doings of the divine," suggesting that all activities, but especially those of leaders, were thought of as human responses to kami power and will. In pairing "ritual" (*sai* or *matsurigoto*) with "politics" (*sei*), Japanese officials were articulating a separation of the two, at least when thinking about imperial rule. But by adding the two characters for "unity," they were saying that political

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The reformers seem also to have understood that Buddhism was more foreign and secular than kami worship, that Buddhism had not received open and direct support from the throne until the middle of the seventh century, and that many Buddhist priests – particularly those who had studied for years in China – were influential specialists on Chinese bureaucratic forms and procedures. The Bureau of Buddhist Affairs and Aliens was therefore placed alongside the Bureau for Court Music (Gagaku-ryō) in the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Although located on the secular side of the bureaucratic structure, both bureaus added "poetic" reinforcement to imperial rule.

Just before the close of the century of reform, Japan's first Chinese-style capital was built at Fujiwara. This was a far more impressive symbol of imperial power than were earlier bronze weapons, huge burial mounds, or grand palaces. Like the Chinese capital at Ch'ang-an, Fujiwara had north–south avenues intersected by east–west ones to form wards (*bō*) that were the city's major geographical and administrative units. As in China, wards located in the middle of the northern side were set aside for an imperial palace compound. Archaeological investigations at Fujiwara reveal that its layout was similar to that of Ch'ang-an and that its principal buildings were constructed with stone foundations and tile roofs in the Chinese fashion. Even provincial and district centers were Chinese in appearance. The emergence of this unusual capital system was surely meant to display power and majesty to foreign envoys – especially those arriving from the Korean kingdom of Silla – and to bearers of tribute from outlying areas of Japan.

The sacred character of Fujiwara was enhanced by the construction of imperial mounds directly south of the imperial palace, on what Hayakawa refers to as a "sacred line." The mound placed closest to the palace was for the burial of Emperor Temmu who died in 686. (The ashes of Empress Jitō, Tenji's daughter and Temmu's empress, were deposited in that same tomb after her death in 702.) Then a second mound was built farther south on that "sacred line" for the ashes of Emperor Mommu, whose death came in 707.[63] Such

activities, too, must be thought of as responses to kami will and power. This concept of the oneness of religion and politics has continued down to modern times. (Its effects on the ideas of present-day leaders is a subject of much debate and disagreement.) All major political change in ancient times, as well as in later periods of history, has therefore been characteristically bound up with appropriate religious change: new kami names and conceptions, new or rebuilt shrines at politically appropriate places, and revised rites and prayers. Therefore *saisei ittchi* underscores the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of understanding either political or religious history apart from interaction between the two.

63 Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, vol. 4 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1974), p. 99.

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a precise geographical relationship between capital and mounds suggest that the court was consciously attempting to further sanctify imperial rule by a visual linkage between these two particularly impressive imperial symbols.

The same objective is detected in the placement of the Fujiwara capital beside the great Middle Road which, along with two parallel roads, ran directly south to the Sacred Mountain (Mt. Miwa). The men who planned the new capital were undoubtedly influenced by the fact that many important kami preferred to reside on nearby mountain peaks. The Fujiwara emperors, it was assumed, should be guarded by the most powerful kami of that particular area,[64] just as the earlier Yamato kings had been associated with the worship of kami residing on neighboring mountains (see Chapter 2).

The awesomeness of the Fujiwara capital as a sacred center of religious and political authority was further enhanced by two great Buddhist temples: the Great Official Temple (Daikan daiji) and the Healing Buddha Temple (Yakushi-ji). The former had emerged first as a Buddhist hall built by Prince Shōtoku in 617 and was later handed over to an imperial prince subsequently enthroned as Emperor Jomei. In 674 Emperor Temmu had the temple moved to the Takaichi District and named it the Great Official Temple. Finally, it was moved by Empress Jitō to Fujiwara where, from a position southeast of the imperial palace, it was made responsible for Buddhist masses (*hō-e*) and prayers (*kitō*) for the benefit of the state.

The Healing Buddha Temple, on the other hand, traces its origins back to 680 when Temmu ordered the founding of a temple as a prayer for the recovery of his ailing principal empress, the woman who succeeded him on the throne in 686 as Empress Jitō. At the time of Temmu's death, no decision had been reached as to where this new temple should be built, suggesting that the empress had recovered and no longer needed the healing Buddha's assistance. But after Temmu's death, Jitō selected a location southwest of the imperial palace and in 697 the temple's sacred object of worship (a great statue of the healing Buddha) was dedicated. These two great temples, with their grand statues and pagodas, added even greater luster to Japan's first Chinese-style capital, a truly sacred center of imperial rule. They also provided additional evidence of Japan's preoccupation with both spiritual and physical sources of authority.

64 See Senda Minoru, "Tojō senchi no keikan wo miru," in Kishi Hideo, comp., *Tojō no seitai*, vol. 9 of *Nihon no kodai* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1987), pp. 115–46.

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The Nara period (710 to 784)

A new capital was erected at Nara (then Heijō) in 710, the beginning of a truly glorious time in the history of ancient Japan. The period did not begin with the seizure of control by individuals who then turned political and economic history in new directions, as at the start of the previous century of reform, but with the construction of a grand capital that was the center of remarkable cultural achievement for more than seventy years. Historical accounts of the period usually drew attention to similarities between Nara and Ch'ang-an (the capital of China after the rise of the T'ang dynasty in 618) and to connections with the previous Japanese capital at Fujiwara. Emphasis is also placed on the emergence of a bureaucratic order based on laws of Chinese origin and character (see Chapter 4), on the erection of great Buddha temple complexes headed by the Tōdai-ji and its great statue of Rushana Buddha (see Chapter 7), on the organization of an intricate and effective revenue-collecting system set up along Chinese lines (see Chapter 8), and on the rise of political disturbances in the closing years of the period when an empress twice occupied the throne (see Chapters 4 and 10). Each of these developments left its mark on much of what was built, made, and written in the remarkable Nara period.

But a closer look at Nara grandeur suggests that a truer picture can be drawn by noting the period's startling cultural achievements (see Chapter 9). Evidence of its surprising architectural advances can still be seen in the remains of Buddhist temples and imperial palaces erected at Nara and local administrative centers;[65] of artistic creativity in the statues and paintings preserved at Buddhist temples;[66] of musical innovation and improved living conditions in the instruments, furniture, and clothes of Emperor Shōmu deposited in the Shōsō-in;[67] and of new intellectual vigor revealed in several chronicles and gazetteers,[68] two

65 Results of recent archaeological investigations are discussed in Naoki Kōjirō, ed., *Kodai wo kangaeru Nara* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1985), pp. 223–51.

66 Minoru Ooka, *Temples of Nara and Their Art*, and Tsuyoshi Kobayashi, *Nara Buddhist Art: Todai-ji*, vols. 7 and 5 of *The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1975).

67 This famous storehouse contains over ten thousand items. See Ryoichi Hayashi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, vol. 6 of *The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1975).

68 The first two chronicles (the *Kojiki* completed in 712 and the *Nihon shoki* in 720) are discussed in Chapter 9. The third (the *Shoku Nihongi*) covering the period from 697 to 791 was presented to Emperor Kwammu in 797 (see n. 2). The gazetteers, which were submitted by the several provinces in response to an imperial order issued in 713, supply geographical information, details about provincial products, and local legends. All of the one received from Izumo (compiled in 733) has been preserved and was translated with notes by Atsuhara Sakai,

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anthologies,[69] some twelve hundred documents stored in the Shōsō-in,[70] a large number of printed mystic formulas (*darani*) inserted in small wooden pagodas,[71] thousands of memos written on wooden tablets (*mokkan*),[72] and hundreds of epitaphs carved in stone and wood.

With such a wealth of historical evidence and deep and widespread interest in Japan's ancient past, hundreds of scholars specializing in one or another area of Nara period history have written thousands of books and articles that help clarify our picture of Japanese life more than twelve hundred years ago. They have also shed light on such knotty interpretative questions as the following.

1. How do we account for such cultural achievement in Nara times? This achievement was not simply a Nara period phenomenon, for most major developments of the period had antecedents running back at least to the Great Reforms of 645. It is likely, moreover, that the destruction of historical evidence during and after the upheaval of that year left pre-645 achievement in the dark. The *Nihon shoki*, in an item for the thirteenth day of the sixth month of 645, reports that

when Soga no Emishi and those allied with him were crushed on the 13th day [of this month], the imperial chronicles, the provincial chronicles, and [other] valuable articles were completely burned. [But] Esakai Fune no Fubito

"The Izumo Fudoki or Records of Customs and Land of Izumo," *Cultural Nippon* 9 (1941): 141–95, vol. 3 (1941) (missing), and vol. 4 (1941): 108–49. Only fragments from those of four other provinces (Hitachi, Harima, Bungo, and Hizen) remain. What is left of the Hitachi report was translated with notes by Atsuhara Sakai, "The Hitachi Fudoki or Records of Customs and Land of Hitachi," *Cultural Nippon* 8 (1940): 145–85; vol. 3 (1940): 109–56, and vol. 4 (1940): 137–86.

69 These were the *Kaifū-sō* (a collection of Chinese poems compiled in 751) and the *Man'yōshū* (a collection of approximately 4,500 Japanese *waka* thought to have been compiled by Ōtomo no Yakamochi, who died in 785). Both works are discussed in Chapter 9 of this volume.

70 These include valuable information not found in the *Shoku Nihongi* and deal mainly with the building and operation of the Tōdai-ji. The documents were used by Joan R. Piggott for her research on "Tōdai-ji and the Nara Imperium."

71 In 770 Empress Shōtoku ordered miniature wooden pagodas made – and *darani* placed in each one of them – for presentation to the major Buddhist temples in and around the capital. The purpose was to pacify the souls of those who had perished in the Fujiwara no Nakamaro uprising of 764. Several of the pagodas, measuring about nine inches high and three and a half inches across the base, are among the holdings of the Kyoto National Museum. The *darani* found in them were once thought to be the world's oldest extant printings, but Denis Twitchett has informed me that archaeologists have found a similar *darani* in Korea, confidently dating it 751 or before. Because the printed characters include forms invented during the days of Empress Wu, Twitchett deduced that they could not have been printed before about 693 (letter from Twitchett to Brown, May 23, 1990).

72 A few of these tablets date back to the last half of the seventh century, but some twenty thousand were written in Nara times. Most were attached to goods submitted in payments of taxes (*chō* and *yō*) or as offerings (*ni-e*).

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rushed in, seized the burning provincial chronicles, and presented them to Prince Naka no Ōe.[73]

Historians conclude that the chronicles referred to here were those that, according to an earlier entry in the *Nihon shoki,* had been compiled by Prince Shōtoku (574–622) and Soga no Umako (d. 626) in 620.[74] Umako would logically have favored the inclusion of anything underscoring Soga connections with the imperial line or adding glory to the Soga record. Leaders of the anti-Soga coup of 645, on the other hand, would certainly have been displeased with any pro-Soga bias. We cannot help but reason, therefore, that it was the victors, not the defeated Soga, who engineered the burning. We have no idea of what or how much was burned, but Japan's later cultural achievement probably would not seem so amazing if we could now read chronicles written before 645.

And yet what is preserved of Nara culture is still impressive, leading Denis Twitchett to ask how a largely illiterate society suddenly developed enough literate people to make the *ritsuryō* state function.[75] One decisive factor, it seems to me, was the Japanese response to an expansive T'ang empire that, in alliance with the Korean kingdom of Silla, destroyed two other Korean kingdoms (Paekche and Koguryŏ) in the 660s. Convinced that Japan, too, would be attacked, officials of the post-645 government first strengthened military defenses in the Inland Sea and then pressed for change on all fronts that would transform Japan into a powerful Chinese-style empire. When urging these diverse and interlocking enterprises, the reform leaders had not only the advice and assistance of Japanese individuals who had spent several years in China but also the services of hundreds of literate and knowledgeable refugees from the defeated kingdoms of Paekche and Koguryŏ. Soon after arriving in Japan, many received appointments to positions of great responsibility in their fields of expertise, including high posts in an emerging statewide educational system. The contributions made by Korean refugees certainly hastened the cultural developments for which Nara has become justly famous, reminding us that the rapid advances made by Japan during those years were not unlike those made after Commodore Matthew C. Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay more than a millennium later. In both cases the Japanese felt threatened by foreign powers and responded by adopting an array of reforms

73 *Nihon shoki* Kōgyoku 4 (645) 4/13, NKBT 68.264; Aston, 2.193.
74 *Nihon shoki* Suiko 28 (620), NKBT 68.203; Aston, 2.148.
75 Letter from Twitchett to Brown, May 13, 1990.

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needed to strengthen their state. The years that followed both periods of foreign danger were times of amazing cultural achievement.

2. Why was a new capital built at Nara? Until a few years ago, historians tended to assume that Empress Gemmei (661–721) – who was on the throne at the time – had simply decided to build a larger and more grand capital than Fujiwara, one more nearly like the Ch'ang-an of China. Nara did become three times the size of Fujiwara, but not nearly as large as Ch'ang-an. However, it is now generally agreed that Gemmei's principal reason for wanting a new capital was to carry out the wishes of her son Emperor Mommu (683–707), the previous occupant of the throne who had ordered in 697 that a search be made for a proper capital site. Although Mommu may have wanted his own reign sanctified by a new Chinese-style capital, the timing and circumstances of the decree suggest that he, like his grandfather Temmu, was influenced by the ancient belief that his imperial son and heir should reign at a new capital.

The view that both Fujiwara and Nara were built for the next male occupant of the throne has caused historians to question the common assumption that Fujiwara and Nara were intended to be permanent capitals, an assumption seemingly supported by the fact that three sovereigns reigned in Fujiwara and seven at Nara. But more recent historical study suggests that in both cases the capital builders were motivated by the desire to erect a new capital for a male successor.

This conclusion is reinforced by a new interpretation of a sentence found in Gemmei's rescript of 707: "I ascended the throne in accordance with a general law established by Emperor Tenji, a law that must not be altered for as long as heaven and earth exist and the sun and moon revolve about the globe."[76] Ever since the time of Motoori Norinaga, scholars have assumed that Gemmei was referring to a law incorporated in Tenji's administrative code. But because no such law was included in the later Taihō and Yōrō codes, the view is now questioned and a new one advanced: that Gemmei was referring to a Chinese principle endorsed by Tenji that an emperor should always be succeeded by his eldest son.[77] Tenji must have used this principle to justify his wish to be succeeded by his eldest son Prince Otomo and not by his brother the crown prince who, following his victory in the civil war of 672, was enthroned as Emperor Temmu. Now it is thought

76 *Shoku Nihongi* Keiun 4 (704) 7/17, KT sec. 1, 3.31.
77 See Hayakawa, *Ritsuryō kokka*, pp. 135–6.

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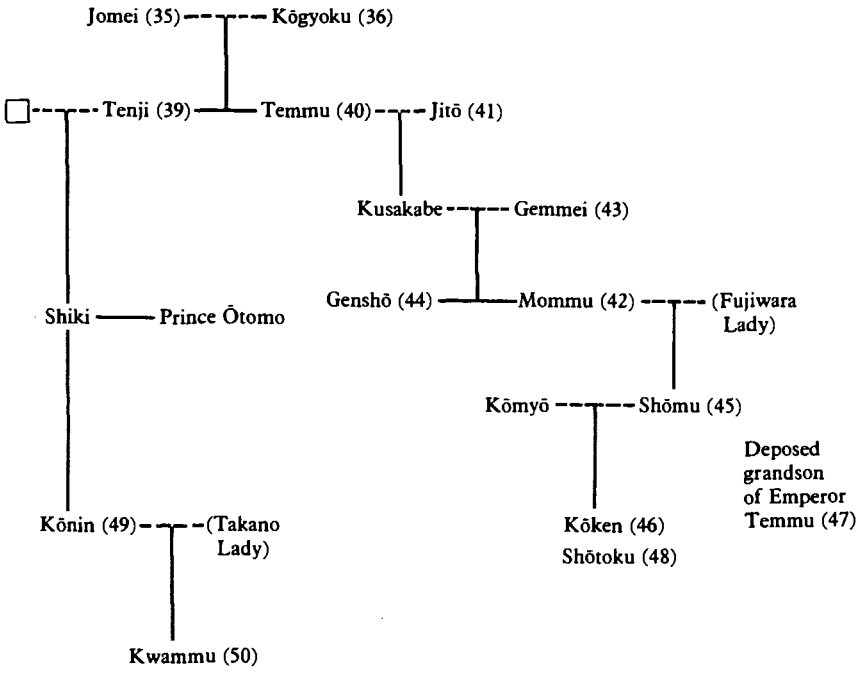

Figure I.1. Break in imperial line. Temmu's enthronement after 672 was followed by eight reigns of men and women who were his descendants, but in 770 a Tenji grandson (Kōnin) was enthroned. Dashed line indicates spousal relationship; solid line, offspring. (Reign numbers are in parentheses, as recorded in the *Gukanshō* chronology; see Brown and Ishida, trans., *The Future and the Past,* pp. 264–78.)

that Gemmei was stressing the correctness and permanence of the same law and for the same reason: to sanctify the enthronement of an imperial son. Just as Fujiwara had been built by Temmu for his son Prince Kusakabe, Nara seems to have been for Mommu's son Shōmu, who was Temmu's grandson (see Figure I.1).

The theory that the two capitals were erected for imperial heirs has been clouded by circumstances surrounding the reigns of three empresses: that of Jitō (645–702), who was enthroned after the death of her spouse (Temmu) in 686, and those of Gemmei and Genshō, whose reigns followed the early death of their son and brother (Mommu) in 707. As Hayakawa pointed out, all three had an interim character: They came when an empress was trying to carry out the wishes of her deceased spouse, son, or brother (previous occupants of the throne) regarding such important matters as succession and capital building.

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Empress Jitō's reign certainly had such a character. She attempted to complete Temmu's plan to have law codes compiled and to have his grandson succeed her. The interim character of the next two reigns by empresses is also clear, but different. Unlike all previous reigning empresses, neither had been the spouse of a deceased occupant of the throne. But Gemmei was Mommu's mother and Genshō his elder sister. Evidence that both were trying to carry out Mommu's wish to be succeeded by his son Shōmu, plus the new interpretation of what Gemmei meant when she cited "the general law of Emperor Tenji," support the view that when ordering the construction of the Nara capital Gemmei was intent on fulfilling Mommu's wish to have his eldest son (Shōmu) rule from a new "sacred center."

3. Why did Shōmu have the capital moved four times between 740 and 745? Unlike his father Mommu, Shōmu did not order, as far as we know, a search for a propitious site on which to build a new capital for his male successor. This may have been because his two-year-old male heir by a Fujiwara daughter (Empress Kōmyō) died in 728. Within the following year, Kōmyō was promoted to principal empress (*kōgō*), a position that entitled her to follow her husband to the throne. But it is felt that no new capital or palace was planned for her. Possibly Shōmu intended that the last of his four new capitals (the one erected beside the old one in Nara) would be for his daughter Kōken, who did reside there during her two reigns, first after 749 as Empress Kōken and again after 757 as Empress Shōtoku. But in the absence of documentary evidence as to what motivated Shōmu to build four new capitals within five years, historians are now inclined to think that not one was for the next male occupant of the throne.

What, then, led Shōmu to undertake four such expensive building projects during those five years? Naoki Kōjirō surmises that each decision to move the capital was connected with a shift in clan influence at court (see Map 4.2). The first was to an area of Tachibana strength (Kuni), the second to Fujiwara territory (Shigaraki), and the third to a place (Naniwa) favored by more than one clan (see Chapter 4). Hayakawa Shōhachi and others wonder, however, whether the court was not then swayed by the Chinese view that the empire should have more than one capital. The T'ang emperors had capitals in east and north China as well as at Ch'ang-an, and two of Shōmu's capital moves (to Shigaraki and Naniwa) were to palaces (*miya*), not capitals (*kyō*).[78]

78 Ibid., pp. 263–7.

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But specialists are now inclined to think, on the basis of both historical and archaeological evidence, that all four capitals were constructed in a rather desperate attempt to obtain a larger measure of divine assistance for the emperor's troubled imperium.

Just a few months before the move to Kuni in 740, Shōmu faced a rebellion led by a high-ranking member of the Fujiwara clan, Fujiwara no Hirotsugu (d. 740) who was Empress Kōmyō's nephew. Origins of the rebellion can be traced back to the smallpox epidemic of 735–7, which had resulted in the death of four high-ranking Fujiwara officials. Thenceforth Fujiwara clansmen were overshadowed by a clique headed by Tachibana no Moroe (684–757). Several Fujiwara men, including Hirotsugu, were transferred (demoted) to posts in distant provinces. Eventually, Hirotsugu decided that Fujiwara fortunes could be restored only by military action. But his rebellion failed. Four days after Hirotsugu's defeat and capture, Shōmu made an imperial visit to Ise Shrine, where the Sun Goddess (the ancestral kami of the imperial clan) is still worshiped. We do not know precisely why he went to this rather distant shrine at that particular time, but current circumstances suggest that he wished to ask the Sun Goddess for protection and assistance. Instead of returning directly to Nara from Ise, Shōmu proceeded to Kuni in the province of Yamashiro and, early in the following year, reported to Ise that the capital had been moved to Kuni.

The building of a palace at Shigaraki in 742 was also connected with endeavors by Shōmu to obtain spiritual protection and assistance, this time from a Buddhist deity (Rushana) rather than from his ancestral kami. In the tenth month of that year Shōmu ordered the erection of a great Rushana statue (fifty-two feet high) at Shigaraki, a statue that was to become, after the work was moved to Nara, the centerpiece of a statewide Buddhist temple system. Shōmu's grandfather Temmu had already taken steps to create such a temple system, and apparently for the same reason, but in the chaotic aftermath of the epidemic, construction was stepped up. In 737 – the year in which the four high Fujiwara officials died of smallpox – Shōmu handed down an edict that two guardian Buddhist statues, and copies of a chapter of the Great Wisdom Sutra, be sent to each provincial temple. Then in 740 – at about the time of the Hirotsugu rebellion but before Shōmu sent his message to Ise – he ordered the distribution of ten more chapters of the same sutra. And in 741 – after the rebellion had been quashed but before the move to Shigaraki had been made – Shōmu handed down a rescript in which he referred to the provincial temples as institutions

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"for the protection [of the empire by the divine power] of the Four Heavenly Kings of the Golden Light Sutra" and stated that these temples were meant "to protect the country against all calamity, prevent sorrow and pestilence, and cause the hearts of the people to be filled with joy."[79]

A linkage between the building of a new capital at Nara in 745 and the making of the Rushana Buddha is suggested first by the fact that work on the statue was shifted from Shigaraki to Nara as soon as Shōmu decided to move the capital to the new Nara site. A further connection between the building of capitals and of temples has been revealed by archaeologists who find that the Tōdai-ji, standing at the heart of the emerging statewide temple system in which the great Rushana statue was the principal object of worship, was built within the very area set aside for the new Nara capital. Historians are therefore inclined to think that Shōmu's major reason for building four new capitals between 740 and 745, as well as for making a great Buddha statue and founding the Tōdai-ji, was to make certain that he and his imperial state received a greater measure of divine protection and assistance.

4. What were the state's major policy objectives during the reigns of Shōmu's daughter? An imperial rescript issued immediately after the enthronement of Empress Kōken (718–70) in 749 announced the adoption of a new era name: Heavenly Peace and Victorious Buddhism (Tempyō Shōhō). A study of what was done and written during the next two decades indicates that this really was a time when serious and continuous attention was given to the preservation of peace and the support of Buddhism. Peace was not preserved, but Buddhist priests and temples enjoyed more state support then than at any other time in Japanese history.

Three years after Kōken ascended the throne, the great Rushana statue was dedicated, and in that same year (752) the Tōdai-ji was granted income from five thousand households in thirty-eight provinces to cover building and operating costs. Two years later a distinguished Chinese priest named Ganjin (688–763) arrived and, shortly afterward, conducted ordination rites for both the empress and her imperial father. But the high point of Buddhist patronage came during Kōken's second reign when the priest Dōkyō (d. 772) (thought to have been the empress's lover) was awarded higher offices and titles than

79 *Shoku Nihongi* Tempyō 12 (741) 3/24, KT 3.163–4.

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had ever before been held by a commoner. Decades of such generous backing made Japan something like a Buddhist state. So these years might well have been referred to as a time of Victorious Buddhism.

But it was hardly a time of Heavenly Peace. Economic difficulties following the terrible epidemic of 735–37 and the Hirotsugu rebellion of 740 were exacerbated by heavy demands for labor and materials needed to complete ambitious building projects. These included not only four new capitals but also the great Saidai-ji (the western counterpart of the Tōdai-ji) and various provincial temples. While Empress Kōken (named Shōtoku during her second reign) was trying to direct the spiritual power of Buddha to the protection of the state and making certain that kami prayers were offered up and cosmological harmony maintained, the country was being torn by internal strife that led to the civil war of 764. The imperial forces won. But the empress died in 770, and after her death, the Fujiwara-led opposition managed the appointment of a successor who was descended from Emperor Tenji (not Temmu), as well as the exile of Dōkyō. Fourteen years later the capital was moved to places outside Nara, bringing the great Nara period to a close. Thus Kōken had not simply failed to maintain Heavenly Peace but also to have a Temmu descendant follow her on the throne, allowing a break in an imperial line of descent that had lasted for nearly a century (see Figure I.1).

5. What was the nature of the conflict between Kōken and Nakamaro? In attempting to understand the essential nature of the strife that plagued Japan during the final years of the Nara period, scholars readily see a bitter and continuing conflict between two opposing groups: one headed by the empress and her beloved Dōkyō and another by Fujiwara no Nakamaro (706–64). Some are inclined to think of the conflict as one between an empress group committed to enhancing the throne's spiritual authority through the worship of Buddha and an aristocrat group steeped in the tradition that a Japanese sovereign was, above all, the highest priest or priestess of kami worship.

Such a view seems to attach undue importance to Dōkyō as a Buddhist leader. He was not the official spokesman for the Buddhist priesthood. His influence was based almost exclusively on his close association with the empress, not on unified Buddhist backing. Moreover, the empress seems to have realized that the legitimacy of her imperial position was rooted in the belief that she and her predecessors were descendants of the Sun Goddess (see Chapter 10). Finally, we see no strong signs of anti-Buddhist feeling among Fujiwara opponents.

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A more tenable theory is now advanced: that the two opposing groups were divided over the issue of whether a Japanese sovereign should assume direct control of state affairs, as in China, or should function mainly as a high priest or priestess of kami worship, as in pre-Temmu Japan. Emperor Temmu and his descendants who occupied the throne until the time of Kōken's death in 770 did try to handle state affairs directly, issuing imperial edicts (*semmyō*) when dealing with such crucial matters as designating an imperial heir, appointing ministers, and enacting new administrative codes. Both Empress Kōken and her mother Empress Kōmyō were obviously drawn to the autocratic style of China's famous Empress Wu.

Fujiwara no Nakamaro and his followers, on the other hand, favored the pre-Temmu practice of having a sovereign devote his attention mainly to ritual, and delegate the handling of secular affairs to an imperial in-law who was also head of the country's most powerful clan (a *gaiseki* or "in-law" clan). Rule of this type had been firmly established as early as the fifth century, and the Soga-dominated state affairs as a *gaiseki* clan between 589 and 645. Following the Soga defeat in 645, the Fujiwara clan enjoyed more influence than did any other nonimperial clan, but it did not have *gaiseki* status, largely because Temmu and his successors were assuming responsibility for both secular and sacral affairs of state. Even so, several Fujiwara men received high ministerial appointments, and in 727 one Fujiwara lady (Kōmyō) was promoted to the position of principal empress. But after the death of four high-ranking Fujiwara officials in the smallpox epidemic of 735–37 and the demise of Kōmyō in 760, Fujiwara no Nakamaro and his followers became convinced that under the autocratic rule of Empress Kōken (then reigning as Empress Shōtoku), Fujiwara fortunes could be improved only by resorting to the use of armed force. So troops were mobilized and sent into action known as the Nakamaro rebellion of 764. Nakamaro was defeated, but the Fujiwara retained enough power to have Kōken succeeded by a descendant of Emperor Tenji (not of Emperor Temmu), to send Dōkyō into exile, and to arrange the appointment of several Fujiwara leaders to ministerial posts.

By making sure that Kōken would not be succeeded by a prince of the Temmu line, Fujiwara leaders generated another great wave of change that submerged the old imperial order and washed up a powerful Fujiwara system of control. Ever since the Great Reforms of 645, emperors had wielded both secular and sacral control, but after 770

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their sway over secular matters was sharply reduced, leaving them with little more than priestly functions. On the other hand, Fujiwara ministers began to take responsibility for such mundane matters as mobilizing troops, collecting taxes, and making political appointments. This shift of secular control from emperors to Fujiwara officials was intertwined with at least three subcurrents of great historical significance. The first was the building of an impressive new capital at Heian, which became Japan's "sacred center" for an indefinite number of reigns, not for just the next emperor. The second was the creation of new bureaucratic arrangements – often involving the use of old offices in new ways – that permits one to conclude that the Nara period *ritsuryō* order was beginning to look more and more like a Fujiwara-dominated bureaucracy. And the third was the building of two Buddhist temple complexes – one on Mt. Hiei for temples of the Tendai sect and another on Mt. Kōya for the Shingon sect – that enjoyed vast landholdings protected by their own Buddhist soldiers (*sōhei*) and that, in continuous interaction with the priestly emperors and Fujiwara clansmen, shaped and colored aristocratic culture throughout the following Heian period (794–1180).

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CHAPTER 1

THE EARLIEST SOCIETIES IN JAPAN

Japan's oldest extant chronicles, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, describe the trek of Kamu-yamato-ihare-biko no Mikoto from south Kyushu to the Yamato plain accompanied by hand-chosen clan (*uji*) heads. He is referred to by later historians as the first emperor, posthumously called Jimmu. At every step he was opposed by well-entrenched people whose conquest often required ingenuity and guile. The degree of their decimation seems to have been determined by the degree of their physical abnormality. For the bulk of his adversaries, the killing of their chiefs was all that was needed to bring them into line. But in extreme cases, such as the Tsuchigumo (earth spiders) who were people too primitive even to have responsible chiefs, pockets had to be eliminated by a process that was not completed until at least the time of the ruler Keikō, sometime in the fourth century A.D. When the physical and social differences were too great, it seems that assimilation was inconceivable and neighborly relations impossible.

These stories may look at first like an unnecessarily candid admission of the presence of other peoples, as the Eight Island Country of Japan was implicitly created for the enjoyment of the descendants of the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu). But by stressing the existence of others, the chosen were sharply distinguished from the undeserving, and the Yamato people could legitimately place themselves at the top of a scaled social ladder. The right to rule was therefore not predicated on prior occupation or existing status but on the act of divine creation. Beyond that there had to be proof of worthiness and a demonstration of dependence on the counsel of native deities called *kami*.

What basis in truth there may be for these stories will long be argued. There is, however, no question but that various groups existed on the Japanese islands before one particularly powerful clan initiated a centralization process that led to the formation of the Yamato kingdom. The first Chinese historians to mention Japan spoke of the people collectively as Wo (Japanese: Wa), and they implied the existence of numerous advanced tribes or chiefdoms. These historians also de-

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scribed in some detail the largest and most prominent locality, called Yamatai. Indeed, the Japanese certainly would not have called themselves Wa, which apparently was a pejorative term. Local people doubtless identified one another by the names of places and natural features and later by occupations, in a slowly emerging self-awareness fostered by Chinese attitudes toward their neighbors. Tribal names, clan names, family names, and eventually personal names gradually emerged, such as Kumaso, Emishi, Nakatomi, Imibe, and Keitai. The pre-Yamato people discussed in this chapter were the precursors of, and participants in, the process that led to the emergence of the Japanese state.

When first identified by historians, ancient peoples often show little cultural distinctiveness. Any differences must therefore be determined by archaeological means, through types of pottery, stone tools, pit dwellings, skeletons and burial styles, subsistence systems, and other remaining evidence of social life. Periods are therefore marked by typological terms for which consistency is a forlorn hope. Problems of translation further complicate the situation. Some terms are more useful in their Japanese form, such as Jōmon and Yayoi, and others are not, hence Paleolithic and Mesolithic. Japanese terms have emerged in irregular fashion: Jōmon is descriptive, used initially to characterize pottery decoration, and Yayoi is a place name, although it has been used only in this century for the area. Neither term – and Yayoi less so – embodies diagnostic traits like those of Paleolithic and Mesolithic, but three generations of experience have established them as indicators of specific cultural developments. On the other hand, the terms Old Stone Age and Preceramic have a history in Japan of only thirty years, and Sōsō-ki (Subearliest) Jōmon far less.

We now see the following general process of development: first, bands roaming about rather widely; second, people using Mesolithic inventions to ensure their survival; third, Jōmon people of different regions living a more sedentary tribal life based mainly on food gathering; and fourth, Yayoi agricultural societies ruled by shaman chieftains and engaged in metallurgy and other activities linked with the emergence of social stratification. The critical agents in this process were geography and floral–faunal resources. Throughout much of this early period these were basic factors of change in a land that was not yet separated from the continent by water. Long afterward, when the level of the seas rose and the islands of Japan were formed, their development was affected by prolonged isolation from the continent, a time of dramatic maturation and subsequent decline of the Jōmon culture.

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Finally, increasing contact with the continent, after about 500 B.C., was associated with the introduction of continental rice and the emergence of Yayoi's agricultural economy, leading directly to the times of recorded history (see Chronology at the beginning of this volume.)

THE PRE-JŌMON PERIOD

The Late Paleolithic stage (ca. 28,000–10,500 B.C.)

The Japanese islands are visible projections of the great east Asian continental shelf. A generally accepted view sees the existence of land bridges until about twenty thousand years ago, making the whole area accessible to immigrants. Then increasingly warm Late Pleistocene temperatures caused the sea to rise, flooding the lowlands and forming islands. Earlier land bridges and inundations had existed. Under moderating climatic conditions, the last inundation separated the islands from the continent and created an environment in which a distinct insular culture began to take shape.

The progressive shaping of the Japanese islands began with the opening of a sea passage between Yaku Island of the Osumi group and the smaller islands of the Ryūkyū chain (now the Tokara Strait), and between Japan and Korea (the Tsushima Strait), both of which are located over elevated parts of the continental shelf. The two straits are now about 140 meters deep. This process occurred later in the north where a somewhat higher segment of the continental shelf left a narrow spit, which eventually became the Tsugaru Strait. The Soya Strait, between Hokkaido and Sakhalin, which is 60 meters deep, is the shallowest of all. Until it and the Bering Straits were opened, these regions had overland routes to north Asia and North America, but they were probably not fully opened until the beginning of the Christian era. The longer period of contact and replenishment from north Asian faunal sources accounts for the more northern character of Japan's animal life.

During Middle Pleistocene times, randomly fluctuating temperatures forced continental animals to migrate to the east, seeking more suitable habitats. The most prominent of these were the Oriental elephants (*Stegedon orientalis*). Somewhat later, as the temperature rose, they were displaced by Naumann elephants (*Palaeoloxodon namadicus naumanni*) that crossed the Korean bridge. They were joined by giant deer (*Megacervus*), an elklike creature from the north China plain, and various mammoths, chiefly *Mammuthus primigenius*, that entered Hok-

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kaido from Siberia. Numerous bones and teeth and a few virtually complete skeletons of elephants have been recovered from scattered sites, mainly from the bed of the Inland Sea and, more recently, from the marshy edge of Lake Nojiri.[1] They had adapted themselves to the changing weather and were able to survive alongside the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the Japanese deer (*Cervus nippon*).

The geology of Japan exhibits little actual glaciation during the Pleistocene age except on the summits of the Japan Alps where the highest peaks rise to three thousand meters and in the Hidaka Mountains in Hokkaido where peaks are somewhat lower, up to two thousand meters. In this last Ice Age, as atmospheric dust from considerable volcanic activity reduced the solar radiation and kept the temperatures low, ash was spewed out over large areas of the country, producing thick layers of fertile soil. The Kantō Loam of the major eastern plain of Japan was formed by substantial eruptions of the Hakone volcanoes to the south and the Akagi volcanoes to the north. First was the Tama Loam, which began about 350,000 years ago and was followed by three Late Pleistocene depositions: the Shimosueyoshi, Musashino, and Tachikawa. The Musashino Loam, or Musashino Upland, was formed at a time of cooling, when conifers were the chief growth in the woodland areas. The deteriorating climate forced northern wildlife, including horses and bison, to move into this region from the loess area of north China, entering by way of the Korean bridge. Brown bears, wolves, monkeys, Japanese deer, and mammoths mingled with southern animals to make this a time of extraordinary variety in Japanese fauna.

Mammoths never reached Honshū, perhaps cut off by the formation of the Tsugaru Strait or deterred by an undesirable climate to the south. Temperatures fell after the formation of the Musashino depositions to about 9°C below present averages, creating subarctic conditions at the beginning of the Tachikawa deposition, roughly 35,000 years ago. The Tachikawa Loam reached a depth of approximately five meters, in some places over a span of around 25,000 years. The modest conifer growth of the time consisted largely of spruce and larch.

These deposits from the Hakone volcanoes are especially well stratified in the south Kantō plain, as the upper atmospheric winds tended to carry the ash from successive volcanic eruptions in an easterly direction. Gradations within this Tachikawa Loam, consisting of eight geological layers (Layers III through X), help archaeologists recognize the stages of cultural change. No other region of Japan provides nearly

1 Nojiri-ko hakkutsu kenkyū-kai, *Nojiri-ko* (Tokyo: Kyōritsu shuppan, 1975).

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as many time-depth data. It is often said that Japan lacks well-stratified Paleolithic sites, indicating considerable mobility caused by relatively poor environmental conditions. But this is not the case with the Kantō plain. The cultural remains there reveal nine successive stages of habitation, starting around thirty thousand years ago. Claims for an even earlier occupation by Paleolithic people, such as the existence of Lower Paleolithic life before about 35,000 B.C. at Babadan and Zazaragi and related sites in Miyagi Prefecture could be strengthened by more precise geological and artifactual associations, clearer evidence that "artifacts" were manufactured, sharper technological distinctions between "Lower" and "Upper" Paleolithic tools, and more reliable dates for these early times.[2]

In 1947 an amateur archaeologist noticed stone artifacts and debris below the usual Jōmon strata in the Kantō Loam at Iwajuku in Gumma Prefecture. By 1949 these were identified as preceramic and eventually recognized as Paleolithic.[3] At about the same time, geologists agreed on the concurrent existence of land bridges and that the presence of Paleolithic people in Japan was no longer unreasonable.[4] Thousands of Paleolithic sites, scattered throughout the main islands, have been found since then. Most are rather far inland, and surprisingly few are in caves. Indeed, among the many caves known to have been occupied in early times, only four contain Paleolithic layers, and all of these are located on the island of Kyushu. Several rock shelters elsewhere have yielded Paleolithic artifacts.

Despite considerable volcanic activity, the Kantō plain afforded the most hospitable environment during the Paleolithic period. Crossed by five major rivers (Sagami, Tama, Ara, Tone, and Kinu), fed by innumerable springs and tributaries, adequately supplied with sources of stone from gravel beds, sheltered by the refuge of mountains in the distance, and blessed by a mild winter climate and mixed flora and fauna, the Kantō plain and its foothills provided satisfactory year-round subsistence. Protracted periods of habitation and periodic re-

2 Serizawa Chōsuke, "Saiko no karyūdo tachi: Kyū-sekki jidai," (in Narasaki Shōichi and Yokoyama Kōichi, eds.; *Kodai-shi no hakkutsu*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1974), pp. 97–116; Serizawa Chōsuke, "The Stone Age of Japan," *Asian Perspectives* 19 (1978): 10–14.

3 Sugihara Sōsuke, *Gumma-ken Iwajuku hakken no sekki bunka* (Tokyo: Meiji daigaku kenkyū-sho, 1956).

4 Minato Masao, Gorai Masao, and Hunahashi Mitsuo, eds., *The Geologic Development of the Japanese Islands* (Tokyo: Tsukiji shokan, 1965), pp. 349–53. Studies in the 1980s have since questioned earlier research and raised serious doubts about the conventional dates. The thirtieth anniversary issue of *Quaternary Research: Daiyonki-kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Daiyon-ki kenkyū kai, 1968) deals with tectonic movements, deep-sea tephras, flora and fauna, formation of terraces and lowlands, and related topics, some of which suggest a considerably earlier disappearance of the land links with the continent.

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turns to familiar sites indicate that the region was by then a suitable place for human life.

People moved into the southern Kantō plain during its first habitable stage around thirty thousand years ago, and despite fluctuations in temperature, it was continuously occupied. About eight thousand years later, there was a stage of heavier plant growth, as is revealed by a layer of much darker soil known as Black Band II, presumably formed when slackened volcanic activity permitted more vegetation, creating a kind of humus. A gradual warming, about twenty thousand years ago, fostered the growth of vegetation composed of herbs (*Scabiosa*), weeds of the thistle family (*Compositae*), and sagebrush (*Artemisia*). Grasses (*Gramineae*) were rampant in open spaces, and maples (*Acer*) and deciduous oaks (*Quercus*) were on the increase.

Between about twenty thousand and thirty thousand years ago, the temperature dropped to its coldest level, approximately 7°–8°C below present averages, and the subalpine forest fell to three hundred to four hundred meters lower than it is currently. Tundra grew in the mountainous districts of north Honshū. Little bands of people left rather coarse cultural artifacts in the lower layers of south Kantō sites, best represented along the Nogawa stream and consisting of large, heavy-duty flake and pebble tools along with some large (and a few partially backed) blades of irregular shape. Although most of these early tools were made of sandstone, slate, and chert, some were of andesite and obsidian, and a few were of agate. Agate was brought from mountains north of the plain or from Yamanashi Prefecture.

Chunks of obsidian for making fine-edged tools were carried great distances. Most of the material originated in the Shinshū Mountains of Nagano Prefecture, at least 150 kilometers from the Nogawa sites, but occasionally the material came from the Hakone Mountains 80 kilometers away. The use of obsidian at places far from its sources suggests that it was collected on hunting expeditions and served as an item of trade in order to ensure a steady supply of this high-quality volcanic glass.

The population increased noticeably between about fifteen thousand and eighteen thousand years ago, as temperatures continued to rise. Southern land bridges were flooded, and the population tended to become concentrated in the best hunting and foraging areas. Oaks were plentiful. Willows (*Salix*) and hackberry (*Celtis*) multiplied, and shrub-sized hazel (*Corylus*) flourished in many areas. Much of the traditional big game was dying out, and the wild nuts, berries, and other plant foods that had once been largely supplements came to be

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basic ingredients of the human diet. Greater dependence on flora lessened the people's mobility, and striking changes were taking place. The sites became larger and more numerous, increasing the quantity of cultural remains.

In the southern Kantō sites, this expansion is most evident in Layer IV. Backed blades were widely used, and projectile points were first chipped on one side and later on both. Because greater range and balance were demanded, bifacial points of small and refined size were made. Clusters of unworked fist-sized stones from the river gravel beds – many of which are fire blackened, heat reddened, and often cracked – had appeared in all earlier occupation layers. They can now be found in Layer IV in great numbers and are associated with signs of cooking, including the use of heated stones for roasting meat. Recent recognition of the significance of these stones adds to our knowledge of Paleolithic life beyond that provided by the usual artifact debris of camp sites.[5]

Major points of entry to "Japan" were widely separated from one another: The Hokkaido bridge was far to the north, and the Korean and Ryūkyūan bridges far to the south. But the areas around the northern bridge were too cold for human survival for long periods, leaving the moderately temperate Korean route from north China and the more temperate southern avenue as the major points of entry. The earliest chopper-using people probably came in by the Korean bridge nearly thirty thousand years ago. There can be little doubt that new arrivals constantly appeared on the scene during the next ten thousand years while the southern land bridge still existed. The north finally became hospitable under warming temperatures, making Japan more accessible from north Asia, but this did not occur until shortly before that bridge was flooded, after which access became impossible except by sea.

Fragmentary human bones claimed to be Paleolithic have been found in Akashi (Hyōgo Prefecture), Kuzū (Tochigi Prefecture), Ushikawa, Mikkabi, and Hamakita (Shizuoka Prefecture), and in a few other sites, but taken collectively they provide few data on the physical appearance of Japan's early inhabitants. The so-called Akashi Man was named after a 1931 discovery of a small left pelvic bone that was destroyed in Tokyo during World War II and that is known today only through a cast. Naora Nobuo, who found the bone, maintained a

5 J. Edward Kidder and Oda Shizuo, *Nakazanya iseki* (Tokyo: International Christian University Archaeology Research Center, 1975), pp. 176–9, 204–17.

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Paleolithic date against almost universal opposition and proposed a Sinanthropus relationship. He was at least partially vindicated when a Paleolithic stage of human existence in Japan was finally proved. Although argument over the bone itself is likely to continue, it has been made less important by the discovery of other skeletal material with claims of roughly equal antiquity.

The Kannon-dō cave in Hiroshima Prefecture yielded a femur fragment with a fossil antler; and the Hijiri-dake cave in Ōita Prefecture contained cranial fragments and fossil bear bones with Paleolithic artifacts, the only case of human skeletal material being found together with artifactual remains. The skull fragments were compared by Ogata Tamotsu with those found in the burials of the Upper Cave at Choukou-tien in the Peking area.[6]

The Mesolithic stage (ca. 10,500–7500 B.C.)

A brief and unusual drop in temperature, which caused the sea to fall between twenty and forty meters below its present level, was followed by a period of rapid warming (and rise in the sea level) about twelve thousand years ago, lasting a little over two thousand years. The subalpine forest receded quickly then, and wildlife headed for higher and cooler altitudes, followed by their Paleolithic hunters. Caves were sought out, perhaps because they offered relief from the rising temperature.

Fauna were greatly depleted as land areas were sharply reduced in size, and with their improved hunting techniques, the larger population killed off the heavier and slower animals. Some species were unable to adapt themselves to the warmth. Roe, musk, and giant deer, tigers, panthers, wildcats, bison, rhinoceroses, north Asian horses, and Naumann elephants all died out. Wolves and brown bears barely survived. The more adaptable creatures lived to become important sources of food for later Jōmon people: Japanese deer, wild boars (*Sus leucomystax*), raccoon-dogs (*Myctereutes procyonoides*), Tōhoku hares (*Lepus brachyurus*), and badgers (*Meles anakuma*). Before the new forests acclimated to warmer conditions had appeared, grasses, ferns, weeds, and other ground plants and shrubs flourished.

To the chronological divisions for the Jōmon period an earlier division was added to accommodate a stage known as Sōsō-ki, which I

6 Ogata Tamotsu, "Dōkutsu iseki shutsudo no jinkotsu shoken josetsu," in Nihon kōkogakkai, ed., *Nihon no dōketsu iseki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1967), pp. 391–2.

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have called "Subearliest" Jōmon. Since it does not have full Jōmon characteristics, its transitional features permit calling it Mesolithic.

Cultural developments in Japan were greatly affected by worldwide changes of climate. Two local inventions, apparently arising in response to such climatic change, revolutionized life and immeasurably increased chances of survival: the bow and arrow in the north and pottery in the south. Both can be explained as indigenous responses to deteriorating subsistence conditions. Neither seems to have been introduced from the outside.

Improved hunting techniques were most conspicuous in the mountains of north Honshū. Numerous long slender spear points have been recovered from many caves and rock shelters of the period. Such points were used – more in some areas than other – as far south as Shikoku. The larger ones found in the subalpine zone were probably for hunting bison and giant deer, and the smaller ones in temperate zones, for Japanese deer and wild boar.[7] The smaller ones were used interchangeably as darts and arrowheads, as the supply of larger game dwindled and hunting turned to smaller and quicker animals.

For example, Layer IX in the Kamikuroiwa rock shelter in Ehime Prefecture on the island of Shikoku (with a radiocarbon date of 10,215 ± 600 B.C.), contained spearpoints, but no arrowheads, and the oldest pottery of Shikoku. Layer VI (with a date of 8135 ± 320 B.C.), on the other hand, had many arrowheads.[8] The progressive effectiveness of hunting techniques is well illustrated in the faunal remains of the two layers. The earlier Layer IX contained large quantities of Japanese deer, boars, bears, and monkeys and also some Japanese serows, badgers, Japanese wolves, lynxes, frogs, and ring-necked pheasants, but to Layer VI, otters and giant flying squirrels were added. In Layer IV, with rouletted Jōmon pottery (dating about 7000 B.C.), in addition to the usual creatures found in quantity (deer, boars, raccoon-dogs, and monkeys) the bones of martens, badgers, many Japanese dogs, rabbits, giant flying squirrels, ermines, rats, and pheasants were excavated. In the Iwashita cave in Nagasaki Prefecture on the island of Kyushu, Layer VI showed deer; Layer V had both deer and wild boars; and Layer IV had otters, raccoon-dogs, rabbits, and Japanese monkeys.[9]

7 Yasuda Yoshinori, "Prehistoric Environment in Japan: Palynological Approach," *Science Reports of Tōhoku University* 28, no. 2 (1978): 171.

8 Carbon 14 dates from the Mesolithic are converted directly to B.C. dates, with the caution that modest adjustments are required. These are generally too recent up to about six thousand years ago. Calibration for older dates is more speculative.

9 Suzuki Michinosuke, "Jōmon jidai sōsō-ki shotō no shuryō katsudō," *Kōkogaku jānaru* 76 (1972): 16–17.

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Shikoku's direct land connections with Honshū permitted a natural enrichment of fauna and, as time passed, allowed for substantially larger catches than those of less fortunate places in Kyushu.

Not one but several types of evidence – stratigraphic relationships, typological developments, and a sequence of radiocarbon dates – suggest that northwest Kyushu was the home of Japan's earliest pottery. These show that the making and use of pottery spread from Kyushu to other parts of the country. The oldest known pots were found in Layer III in the Fukui cave at Nagasaki, with a date converted to 10,750 ± 500 B.C.; Layer II has a date of 10,450 ± 350 B.C. The lowest ceramic layer (Layer IX) in the Kamikuroiwa rock shelter at Ehime is dated to 10,215 ± 600 B.C. The oldest layer in the Iwashita cave at Nagasaki is thought to be 9250 ± 130 B.C. These dates become more recent as we move from Kyushu to Shikoku and Honshū. They are doubtless subject to some calibration, but by just how much is now hard to say. Doubts about the extreme antiquity of pottery in Japan usually have been grounded in the possibility of contamination by volcanic action, a phenomenon certainly not limited to Japan. But the earliest dates are for charcoal samples in pottery-bearing layers deep in caves and rock shelters where at least later volcanic fallout should have had no noticeable effect. The one dubious date is for a shell from the Natsushima shell mound, placed in the Earliest Jōmon period after people had begun to subsist on lower riverine and marine foods. But even that is substantiated by the date of a charcoal sample from the same site.

The location of Fukui on the northwest coast of Kyushu suggests continental connections, but as of this writing the oldest date for Chinese pottery is still substantially later than the earliest Jōmon pieces, and no known comparable pottery has been found in China.[10] Old pottery may eventually be uncovered on the continent. If so, it should be in a Mesolithic context and/or be recognizably transitional.

Subearliest Jōmon pottery is extremely primitive and breaks into sherds the size of postage stamps. The restored vessels are small, round bottomed, low fired, and dirt brown in color. At the Sempukuji cave, not far from the Fukui cave, the excavator claims to have found even older pottery with pellets decorating the otherwise plain surface – a "bean pattern." The Fukui cave pottery, on the other hand, has a

10 One dubious date of 8920 ± 240 B.C. is given for a shell associated with cord-marked pottery at Hsien-jen-tung, Wan-nien, Kiangsi Province (China). Otherwise, dates of 5630 ± 410 and 5415 ± 410 B.C. are available for bone found with coarse red Neolithic pottery from Tseng-p'i-yen, Kueilin, Kuangsi Province.

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decoration that consists of linear-relief and raised parallel ridges that are generally wider in the south and narrower in the north. It has been found on a roughly south–north line from Kyushu to Yamagata Prefecture. This Fukui-type pottery is followed at many sites by nail-marked pottery. But sites yielding both types are seldom found west of the Kansai area. The people who made them were apparently leaving southwest Japan for cooler regions.

The invention of pottery making was not limited to Japan. Wherever it was made, it was quite likely a product of accident and astute observations. Conditions in Kyushu at that time offered only marginal chances of survival. The inhabitants who stayed on were driven to find alternative sources of nourishment. Boiling otherwise indigestible plants, especially certain grasses and ferns, made them edible and sometimes even palatable. Making pottery was probably the housewife's chore, as all the raw materials – clay, water, and firewood – were outside her back door. Pottery contributed greatly to the quality of life. It enlarged the range of action, freeing people from fixed water sources. Storage techniques allowed habitation near nut-yielding forests, contributing to a more sedentary life and to a population increase into the Middle Jōmon. Before the Jōmon period came to a close, pots were used not only for cooking and storage but were adapted also for burial, ritual, and aesthetic use. They reflected at a personal level the interests of the smallest communities and were the first artifacts to register cultural change.

Microblades as well as pottery were used in Kyushu. These were small flake bladelets hafted perhaps on a handle and aligned for reaping grasses and ferns. Elsewhere these microliths may have been attached to the end of a tapered shaft and used as projectile points but were soon superseded by arrowheads.

Microblades are a well-known type of tool found in Sakhalin and Siberia, west to the Yenisei valley, and represent a major cultural link between Japan and north Asia at about the close of the Paleolithic period, before land connections were severed by the rising sea.

THE JŌMON PERIOD

The Earliest Jōmon stage (ca. 7500–5000 B.C.)

The Kuroshio, a warm-water current sweeping up from the south, and the Oyashio, a cooler current from the north, met along the east coast to provide exceptionally good spawning grounds for marine fauna. Shellfish in bays, inlets, and tidal pools were discovered to be a rich

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source of food, even during the winter months, and supplemented the diminishing supply of animal life. The word *jōmon* (literally, "cord pattern") comes from a description of pottery found in the first shell-mound excavation of modern archaeology. The excavation was made by an American scientist, Edward S. Morse, who came to Japan in 1877 and proceeded shortly thereafter to excavate the shell mounds of Ōmori, which he had noticed when traveling by train between Yokohama and Tokyo. In his book *The Shell Mounds of Omori* (1879) Morse refers to the excavated pottery as "cord-marked," noting especially a great profusion of such pottery. For a time, this was described as "Ainu school pottery" or "shell-mound pottery," but a literal translation of Morse's original description (jōmon) gradually came to stand for the entire period in which such pottery was produced.

Typology lagged until the 1930s but then rapidly developed after a chronological system was set up by Yamanouchi Sugao around 1937.[11] His scheme divided the Jōmon period into Earliest, Early, Middle, Late, and Latest, a temporal arrangement in which all types of pottery were placed in historical order, paralleled by cognate types found throughout the country. Moreover, Yamanouchi's stages were of about equal length. Progressively more detailed studies of hundreds of pottery types did little to change this scheme, but the advent of new dating techniques makes it clear that although the basic sequence is tenable, the strong regionality of culture is obscured if the scheme is left unqualified. Local differences created substantial time overlaps, and each phase became somewhat shorter with greater cultural complexity.

Use of the Jōmon term begs the question of whether the period is genuinely neolithic. The hunting of fossil creatures was basic to the economic life of the preceramic stage, hence the term Paleolithic. The addition of microliths and pottery to an essentially hunting economy is regarded as characteristic of a Mesolithic age, but there are no signs of plant cultivation in early Jōmon. The possibility of simple manipulation of cultigens in later Jōmon stages is being debated. The period is therefore protoneolithic. For want of a better name, Jōmon is thus the most useful.

Following the discovery of "pre-Jōmon" pottery in Kyushu and elsewhere, Yamanouchi added an earlier stage that he called Sōsō-ki (the "grass-roots" stage). It has been adopted by some and rejected by others on the ground that the pottery is not "Jōmon" and that the

11 Yamanouchi Sugao, "Jōmon doki keishiki no saibetsu to taibetsu," *Senshi kōkogaku* 1 (1937): 29–32, used the stages Sōki, Zanki, Chūki, Kōki, Bunki.

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subsistence system of this phase was Paleolithic-style hunting. Some Westerners use this term, which I call Subearliest in order to distinguish the phase from, and to show its relationship to, Earliest Jōmon. Some prefer "Incipient."

Natsushima is the site of the oldest deposit of shells left by early people in the Kantō plain, with radiocarbon dates of 7290 ± 500 and 7500 ± 400 B.C. Its lowest layer contained mostly oysters and *Anadara granosa,* a warm-water mollusk.[12] Shells in that layer, which yielded the Earliest Jōmon bullet-shaped pots, included those of *Yamato shijimi* (a freshwater clam), as well as perch and gilthead bones (both freshwater fish), suggesting habitation near the mouth of a reasonably large river. *Asari* and *hamaguri* (clams) were commonly found on the top layers with slightly later pottery, where gilthead was replaced by red seabream (*madai*) that inhabits deeper waters. The bay was then moving inland, forcing the Jōmon people to retreat to higher ground and inundating some earlier community sites.[13]

By and large, the sites of this phase are rather few, and their cultural content is relatively meager. Bone fishhooks, usually not barbed, were rapidly improved along the northern coast. Arrowheads were small, used more frequently by inland hunters. Plant bulbs and starchy roots were dug with large, adzlike tools that were made of sandstone, slate, or other soft stone. Nuts and possibly seeds were pulverized with grinding stones.

Hanawadai in Ibaragi Prefecture is the first recognizable Earliest Jōmon community site.[14] Five house pits lying about 10 meters apart contained two successive Hanawadai pottery subtypes, probably meaning that not more than three houses were occupied at any one time. The little bands of occupants could hardly have numbered more than ten or fifteen. One pit is not quite square, measuring 4.6 by 3.8 meters, and has twelve holes for posts. Outdoor fireplaces were used. Seemingly inconvenient bullet-shaped pots stood upright in the soft, loose surface soil. Dogs were kept around the house, the *Canis familiaris japonica* (small, short-haired, Spitz-like dogs) that were perhaps ancestors of the present-day Shiba.

Most of the few human skeletons excavated from sites of this phase have been found intentionally buried among the shells, lying on their

12 Sugihara Sōsuke and Serizawa Chōsuke, *Kanagawa-ken Natsushima ni okeru Jōmon bunka shotō no kaizuka* (Tokyo: Meiji daigaku bungaku kenkyūsho, 1957).

13 Esaka Teruya, *Jōmon doki to kaizuka,* vol. 2 of *Kodai-shi hakkutsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1973), pp. 89–90.

14 Yoshida Itaru, "Ibaragi-ken Hanawadai kaizuka gaihō," *Nihon kōkogaku* 1 (1948): 27–33.

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backs in flexed positions. They dramatize the severe conditions faced by the people of that day. The earliest known Jōmon man was uncovered in 1949 below a shell layer in the Hirasaka shell mound in Yokohoma City. He stood rather tall for a Jōmon person: about 163 centimeters. His lower left molars were worn down to the jawbone, probably caused by years of pulling leather thongs across them, and X-rays of his bones showed growth interruptions, interpreted as near-fatal spells of extreme malnutrition during childhood. The joints testify to early aging. Virtually unused wisdom teeth are partial evidence for a life expectancy of about thirty years, an estimated average through the Middle Jōmon, with an increase of only one year during the next two millennia, until the adoption of rice as a dietary staple.

Subcultural divisions of the Earliest Jōmon period are located in the south, the Kantō, and the north. From Kyushu to the Kantō plain, pointed-bottomed pots were decorated by rolling a carved stick over the surface. In the Kantō a rudimentary form of cord marking was used. But to the north of that plain and at about the same time, decorative techniques were dominated by shell marking and imprinting.

The last complete listing of sites published for each prefecture by the Cultural Properties Commission shows 2,530 for the Earliest Jōmon, or 9 percent of the Jōmon aggregate. Almost half of these are located in the lowlands of the Kantō (1,213), with Tokyo claiming the lion's share (349). The mountainous Chūbu region follows (377), then the Tōhoku in the north (249), and Kyushu in the south (243). The entire Chūgoku region has only 83, or 3.28 percent of the total. (See Map 1.1.)

Koyama Shuzo calculated the population of the Earliest Jōmon to be around 21,900.[15] Inhabitants had moved to higher land in the valleys of the lower-central mountains and established communities to the northeast. Concentration in these areas throughout most of the Jōmon period can be accounted for by a variety and abundance of plant, mammal, and sea life, where northern and southern environmental zones overlap in central Japan. With the exception of the Latest Jōmon, and possibly the Middle Jōmon, the Kantō sites are usually more numerous and frequently larger. Over half of the Earliest Jōmon population was strung out along the banks of Kantō streams, with ready access to water supplies, for the same reason that earlier and later people – amounting to teeming millions in modern times – congregated there. Yet until the

15 Koyama Shuzo, "Jomon Subsistence and Population," *Senri Ethnological Studies*, no. 2 (Miscellanea no. 1) (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1978), pp. 6–7, 56.

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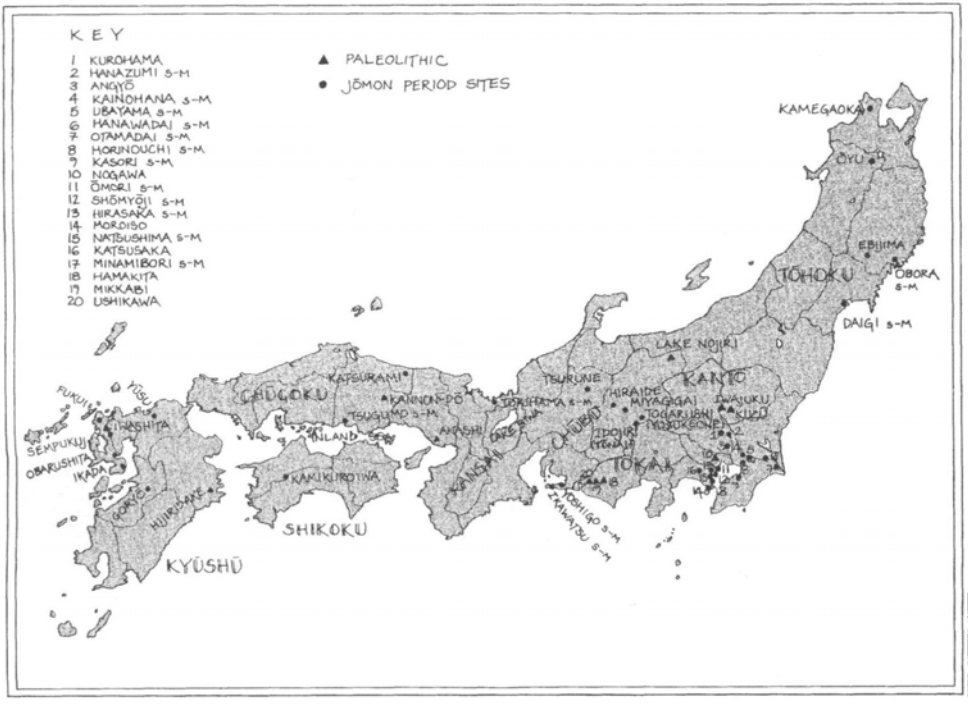

Map 1.1 Paleolithic and Jōmon period sites. Notation s-m after site name indicates shell mound.

medieval centuries it was always a rather uninventive area – with the possible exception of the unusual sixth-century *haniwa* – where relatively little initiative was demanded for survival.

The Early Jōmon stage (ca. 5000–3500 B.C.)

Consistent warming and a rising sea level pushed the coastal population farther inland during the Early Jōmon period, with the temperature peaking several degrees higher than today toward the end of this stage. Water flooded low valleys, and some Kantō sites are as much as fifty kilometers from the present shore. In the Kitakami plain of the Tōhoku region a few sites lie about thirty kilometers inland, but elsewhere the steep eastern coast prevented such extreme marine aggression. Farther south, the Inland Sea joined the ocean, leaving Shikoku and Kyushu as islands.

The shell mounds of this stage contain chiefly freshwater clams (*Yamato shijimi* or *Corbicula japonica*, and marine *haigai* or *Anadara*

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granosa) and oysters (*magaki* or *Crossostrea gigas*).[16] Animal bones – not numerous – are chiefly those of deer, boars, flying squirrels, and Siberian mountain lions. Investigations indicate that mainly older deer were hunted, that the fast-breeding wild boars were killed indiscriminately, and that mountain lions were dying out. In the more isolated areas of western Japan, animal life was reduced, leaving fewer resources for human survival. The higher temperature encouraged the growth of the evergreen oak forests (*Quercus*) that covered much of west Japan.

The warmer temperature was also conducive to the growth of warm-water *Anadara granosa* as far north as the Daigi shell mound near Matsushima Bay, although its habitat is now south of Tokyo. On the other hand, the coldwater mollusk (*Pecten yesoensis*), now thriving in northeast Honshū, could not stand the warmth and is therefore missing from the Early Jōmon shell mounds of that area.

Around the middle of the Early Jōmon, reliable food sources and somewhat longer stays near the coast produced a dramatic increase in population. According to Koyama's calculations, the Early Jōmon population numbered around 106,000, or five times that of the Earliest Jōmon, an increase unmatched at any other stage of the Jōmon period.

Small Early Jōmon villages, developed on bluffs, had pit houses grouped in the form of a horseshoe. The presence of pottery of several successive types at a single site indicates continuous habitation. As this occurred, family demands fostered advances in house construction. The older, poorer shelters or huts were now transformed by the introduction of substantial inner posts strong enough to hold a roof over a rectanguloid floor. Rainwater shed by the pitched roof was drained off through surrounding ditches. *Kaya* (a miscanthus) was probably the roofing grass, fifteen centimeters of which would have been enough to keep the interior dry. Toward the end of the Early Jōmon, the inner space took the form of a square with rounded corners. Some fireplaces were moved inside, though rarely were placed in the middle of the floor. Indoor living now offered more attractions.

Houses were occasionally extended to accommodate growing families, but archaeological evidence reveals few repairs and almost no overlapped houses so often found at Middle Jōmon sites. The forty-eight houses of the Minabori shell mound, located on a rather level

16 Kaneko Hiromasa, "Gyorō no tenkai," in Esaka Teruya, ed., *Jōmon doki to kaizuka*, vol. 2 of *Kodai-shi hakkutsu* (Tokyo, Kōdansha, 1973), pp. 119–24.

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plateau in Yokohama and distributed to form a rough arc, had doors facing an open space to the north.[17] Because successive rebuilding did not alter this fundamental plan, it is thought that use of the common area had become well established. An improving economy is suggested by storage pits found both inside and outside houses. Such pits were lined by alternating layers of leaves and nuts in order to keep most of the pit's contents dry, allowing cupboard raids to expose only a little at a time.

Most of the house pits of Minabori contained Kurohama-type pottery belonging to the middle years of the Early Jōmon. These flat-bottomed pots were designed for cooking, and their new shapes made them more practical for indoor living on intensely used floors that were tamped hard. A short-lived spell of tempering the clay with small fibers – a practice that perhaps started in the Tōhoku and moved south – may have been connected with attempts to strengthen the walls of the pots when increasing their size and experimenting with flat bottoms. Heavy cord marking is typical, and before the Early Jōmon phase was over, Moroiso-type pottery appeared, bearing imprinted and incised decorative arcs and parallel lines made with the end of a small split bamboo stick.

Recent excavations at the Torihama shell mound in Mikata-chō of Fukui Prefecture point up hitherto unknown advances in the Early Jōmon.[18] One of the rather few kitchen middens found on the west side of Japan, it lies beside the Hasu River in a laurel (*laurilignosa*) forest area dominated by oak. These excavations show that boars, deer, monkeys, raccoon-dogs, bear, serows, otters, martens, and badgers were hunted; several kinds of fish were caught; and a variety of freshwater shellfish, saltwater mollusks, clams, oysters, and ark shells were collected. Walnuts, hazelnuts, and acorns were also gathered. But of special interest are the bottle gourds (*Lagenaria siceraria*) and "green beans" (*Phaseolus* sp.) that were pea shaped and found in long narrow pods averaging eleven centimeters in length and thirteen beans to a pod. Many Japanese archaeologists regard both as cultivated plants, indeed suggesting that pollen changes indicate environmental alterations caused by clearing and that trees of foothill forests were cut and used for building materials, wooden tools, and firewood.[19]

17 Mikami Tsugio, ed., *Nihon no akebono*, (vol. 1 of *Zuzetsu Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1974), pp. 106–7.

18 Toriyama Kaizuka kenkyū gurūpu, ed., *Toriyama kaizuka 1980 Nendo chōsa gaihō: Jōmon zenki wo shu to suru teishitsuchi iseki no chōsa gaihō, 2* (Fukui-ken kyōiku iinkai, 1981).

19 Yasuda, "Prehistoric Environment," p. 242.

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Preserved remarkably well are ropes, reed baskets, and many wooden objects, including oars, boards, adzes, bows, and carved bowls and a comb which are the oldest pieces of lacquer ever found in Japan. Other innovations were polished stone axes, bone needles, and thimblelike bone rings. Vertically angled blades were changed to adz-shaped tools by the use of right-angled tree forks, probably for better hacking and digging of new forms of vegetation.[20]

Torihama is no longer an isolated case. Gourd seeds have also been found in the Early and Latest Jōmon sites of Gifu and Saitama. The Middle Jōmon Idojiri "bread," which has long defied analysis, is now thought to have contained some eight skins of beans. The Middle Jōmon Tsurune settlement site in Takayama City, Gifu Prefecture, yielded two carbonized beans (*Leguminosae*) that are reportedly similar to a cultivated continental Asian bean for which there was nothing comparable in Japan.[21]

The Middle Jōmon stage (ca. 3500–2400 B.C.)

The Middle Jōmon culture emerged rapidly in the central mountains of Japan around 3500 B.C., flourished for roughly a thousand years, and faded almost as rapidly. It was a warm stage with temperatures that slowly dropped but never declined to today's average.

Explanations for this dramatic florescence of culture include different theories: that it was associated with the external introduction of domesticated root plants, that it was a product of an indigenous development of primitive agriculture, that it arose from an exploitation of rich nut crops on the southern slopes of the Yatsugatake Mountains, and that it was linked with an escape from the insufferable summer heat of the lowlands. It is likely that the introduction of yams and taro (said to have come from south China) and the application of plant manipulation techniques (including the transplanting of horse chestnut seedlings at lower areas) contributed to a population explosion.[22] Yams (*yamanoimo: Dioscorea japonica*) and lily bulbs (*ubayuri: Cardiocrinum cordatum*) were cultivated for their starchy content and preserved for winter use. Starch was leached out in springs, and chunks were steamed on wicker trays in pots to make rolled bread (*koppepan*). Charred bread was unearthed in house no. 4 at Sori and in house

20 Ibid., p. 203.

21 Reported by several participants at the Old Cultural Properties (Kobunkazai) Symposium in Nagoya (November 1979), sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Education.

22 Esaka Teruya, *Nihon bunka no kigen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1967), pp. 88–94.

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no. 9 at Tōnai, at the Idojiri sites in Nagano Prefecture.[23] Horse chestnuts also produced large quantities of starch with relatively little effort. The proliferation of adz or axelike tools made of stone unfit for cutting trees, such as sandstone and slate, is taken as evidence of spading needed for cultivating starchy roots and bulbs.

The rise of an incipient agriculture would not have required the introduction of foreign flora. Long residence in an area could have led to the selection and some manipulation of root plants to improve yields. Escape from the heat is less facetious than it might at first appear to be. Resources were plentiful along the coast, but animal life was more abundant in marginal forest areas. Nagano Prefecture alone has 2,408 Middle Jōmon sites, many at altitudes of between eight hundred and twelve hundred meters. The average drop in temperature of one-half degree centigrade for every one hundred-meter increase in elevation would make a difference of four or five degrees between the mountains and the plain, certainly a difference that added considerable comfort. Animals avoided the steamy coastal heat, and people followed. Winters in the mountains were windy and cold, but seasonal trips to lower ground – made more practical with chunks of obsidian being used as a medium of exchange – were probably made.

The higher forest line in central Japan was an appropriate area for all nut crops. Acorns (chiefly *Quercus serrata, Q. mongolica, Q. acutissima,* and *Q. dentata*), walnuts (chiefly *Juglands sieboldiana*), chestnuts (*Castanea crenata*), and horse chestnuts or buckeyes (*Aesculus turbinata*) all were available in the Chūbu. Walnuts grew in northern zones; they had grown only in south Japan in the cold Earliest Jōmon. Chestnuts thrived in the north and in the Chūbu region, and acorns could be found on the east coast, in the Chūbu region, and toward the southwest.

The sequence of harvests in the overlapping central zone (horse chestnuts in early September, chestnuts in September to early October, acorns and walnuts in October and November) offered great advantages. Chestnuts were the most practical. They could be efficiently stored after they had been heated to kill the vermin, and dried, but like horse chestnuts, they are far inferior to walnuts and acorns in caloric value. Walnuts are the most nutritious but the least efficiently stored. Many species of oaks yield a variety of acorns. Nuts from evergreen, shiny-leafed oaks (especially *Cyclobalanopsis*) in west Japan can usually be eaten with little preparation, but those from deciduous

23 Fujimori Eiichi, *Idojiri* (Tokyo: Chūōkōron bijutsu shuppan, 1966), pp. 139–42.

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trees (especially *Q. mongolica*) in the east contain bitter tannic acid that needs to be leached out in running water for days or even months before they become edible.[24] This accounts for the location of many Middle Jōmon sites near springs. Supplementary foods included wild grapes, butterburr (*Petasites japonicus*) for the salinity of the flower buds, bracken or young fronds of eagle fern stalks (*Pteridium aquilinum*), *kuzu* vine (*Pueraria lobata*), an arrowroot starch, and several kinds of mushrooms. Meat was only nominally important in the Middle Jōmon because of the abundance of other foods.

Middle Jōmon sites frequently occupy thousands of square meters and include scores of house pits, many of which were rebuilt, frequently in overlapping locations. Few sites contain only one pottery type; most have several. The usual house was round, about six meters in diameter, with a floor forty to fifty centimeters below the surface. Five or six posts, each up to forty centimeters across and deeply sunk below the floor, supported a conical superstructure. Fireplaces were located in the middle, sometimes outlined with stones or provided with a bowl or pot. The hearth furnished light and warmth in the evening and became the center of family life around which developed, over the millennia, highly ritualized relationships.

Of the house pits of the Ubayama shell mound in Chiba Prefecture, one occupied 12.2 square meters and contained five skeletons, four adults and one child. Because the disarray of the bones rules out the possibility of burials, these persons must have died by accident or violence. Whether or not they were members of the same "family," each had an average housing space of 2.45 square meters. Another house pit at a different site shows, by its extra postholes and shifted hearths, that it had been enlarged seven times, each addition averaging three square meters. From such information and the usual size of a Middle Jōmon house, it can be deduced that an average abode could comfortably accommodate five occupants. Judging from the pottery types, five to eight houses were normally in use at a given time.

Supporting posts were often repositioned, fireplaces relocated, and surrounding ditches redug, perhaps more frequently than natural deterioration required. Abrupt changes of fortune, such as disease, death, and poor harvests, might have been signals to move, as the spot would have been perceived to be ill fated and therefore to be vacated. But the area itself was usually too good to be abandoned. A ritual removal is exceptionally well attested to at Yosukeone (a branch site of Togariishi)

24 Watanabe Makoto, *Jōmon jidai no shokubutsu shoku* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1975), pp. 53–55.

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in Nagano Prefecture, the site of a somewhat-larger-than-average community. Pits of twenty-eight houses have been uncovered. Some were rebuilt only a few meters away, using fireplace stones that matched holes left in earlier houses. Standing stones, figurines, and stone phalli of the second set of houses had been moved from the first. When the entire village was abandoned, the fireplace stones of only five houses remained in place.[25]

Known Middle Jōmon sites numbered 10,893 in 1966, or 2.47 times that of Early Jōmon. Of these, 36.5 percent are in the Kantō region and 27.49 percent in the Chūbu, the highest ever recorded for the central mountainous belt. This belt, when joined with the western end of this transverse zone, contains 73.5 percent of the Middle Jōmon sites. The entire population of Japan at that time, estimated to have been 262,500, was much larger than at any other Jōmon stage. On the other hand, in the area extending from the Kinki to the southwest – the whole southern half of the country – can be found only 3.67 percent of all Middle Jōmon sites. They are very scarce in Shikoku. Kyushu continues to have relatively few: Earliest: 243 sites, Early: 233, and Middle: 221.

A more settled and leisurely life, with more mouths to feed, led to the making of large vessels that were often florid. For the first time there was variety: upright pots for cooking and storage, large bowls for cooking, narrow-necked vessels for steaming foods, and cups for drinking. There were also lamps and other objects for ritual use. For pottery developed in the mountains during the early Middle Jōmon, coarse clay was used for thick walls and plastic decorations that included ridges, handles, and rim ornaments. In the latter half of the Middle Jōmon, potters turned to dense oblique cord marking.

Pottery of the early half of the Middle Jōmon is classified as Katsusaka (a site in Kanagawa Prefecture dug around 1926) and as Otamadai or Atamadai (a shell mound in Chiba Prefecture reported since about 1894). Pottery for the later half is known as Kasori E (a spot in the often-excavated Kasori shell mound in the same prefecture, dug especially since 1937). All were fired in the open at a relatively low temperature, with Katsusaka becoming burnt reddish, Otamadai dirt brownish, and Kasori E salmon orange.

In north Japan, pots followed the Early Jōmon tradition, having roughly cylindrical shapes and bearing heavy cord marking. In south Japan, they were rather nondescript. The Middle Jōmon people

25 Tsuboi Kiyotari, ed., *Jōmon bunka ron*, vol. 1 of *Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), pp. 118–21.

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avoided or failed to occupy the east side of Kyushu, and the volcanic activity of Mt. Aso in north Kyushu was then so violent that the area was too hazardous for habitation. Earliest Jōmon pottery of that area lies in a lower layer of volcanic ash, and Late and Latest pottery was found in an upper layer, with none for Middle Jōmon, indicating that Middle Jōmon people gave this area a wide berth.

Mountain dwellers made the more dramatic Katsusaka pottery and related types, whereas lowland and coastal dwellers produced the more modest Otamadai pottery and its subtypes. The latter extends from Tokyo to Lake Kasumigaura in Ibaragi and southern Fukushima. Some relationships apparently formed between the two, causing Katsusaka houses to contain many Otamadai fireplace bowls.

The trademark of Otamadai is pottery in which clay is tempered with phlogopite, a kind of mica found mainly in mountains north of Tokyo but also in clay and sand deposits along old streambeds in the Kantō region. The Otamadai pottery is widely distributed, despite the rather limited sources of mica, raising questions about production, sites, trade, the transportation of clay, distribution systems, and, of course, tribal relationships. As intriguing as these questions are – leading to speculation about intermarriage and dowries or gifts between tribal groups – their answers are currently little more than guesswork. This "fool's gold" added a fine decorative element to Otamadai pots and also gave them greater functional value, for it produced a more heat-resistant clay that baked well and contracted less while drying.

The Katsusaka people, in contrast with the Otamadai, had a hyperactive subculture centered in Nagano Prefecture and diffused toward opposite coasts. Scores of sites are located by springs on the terraces and plateaus of the Yatsugatake Mountains along the eastern edge of the route to the obsidian sources in the Shinshū Mountains south of Lake Suwa. It was in these cooler mountains where the sturdy houses and indoor fireplaces were first constructed and from which they spread to the lower regions of Honshū.

Notable features of Katsusaka pottery are its many snake motifs and animal-like heads in rim decorations. These snakes are accepted as representing *mamushi*, the most poisonous snake on Japan's main islands and one that prefers higher altitudes and cooler weather. Snake cults survive in several regions today, especially in mountainous areas and around Lake Suwa. The toxicity of the *mamushi* bite upsets mental faculties before death, and the Jōmon people, who must have known this, may have regarded the effects as a form of spirit possession. Just

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the hibernation and skin shedding of snakes must have caused Katsusaka people to conclude that this creature was truly mystical. Pottery rim-heads with rodent-shaped faces, having slant eyes and sometimes harelips are found most frequently on steaming vessels. These faces may have been a protective symbol.

Clay figurines first appeared in Earliest Jōmon, but their number increased noticeably in Middle Jōmon, particularly in the mountains. Their faces are animal-like, and their bodies are upright with enlarged breasts and exaggerated buttocks. A few heads are crowned by a coiled snake, suggesting incipient snake-cult ceremonies performed by female shamans. Figurines and lamps are found together in houses too often to be coincidental, but how Jōmon people connected them is far from clear.

One fire-destroyed house at the large Hiraide site in Nagano Prefecture was set well apart from others, and it contained almost all the figurines recovered from that site.[26] Stylistically dissimilar and therefore not in the house of their maker or makers, the figurines were apparently abandoned in what may have been a polluted parturition house that was intentionally burned. The figurines may have afforded protection during childbirth, after which they were abandoned. Over a thousand were found at the unique ritual site of Shakadō in Yamanashi Prefecture, all in small pieces, where, it is believed, they were broken in order to effect cures.

Phallic stones appear in all sizes, from a few centimeters to two meters in height. When their original positions can be determined, they stood at the entrance to or on a kind of platform in the house. If inside they were usually accompanied by one or more figurines. The relationship between the two suggests a greater awareness of the role of males in the fertility process.

Clusters of ritual objects are rare, but pit dwelling no. 3 at Idojiri in Nagano must have been that of a group leader, either male or female. It contained all the ritual trappings of the time, as though this person either controlled or was involved in every aspect of the group's ceremonies: a lamp, a pot with a rim head, figurines, stone phalli, and a barrel-shaped vessel.

Early Middle Jōmon symbols found in the mountains were connected primarily with birth and regeneration, but those from the latter half of Middle Jōmon, found more frequently in the lowlands, seem to have been associated with the care of the dead. As the culture mel-

26 Hiraide iseki chōsakai, *Hiraide* (Tokyo: Asahi shimbunsha, 1955), pp. 46–48, 151–3.

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lowed and spread, people producing Kasori E pottery buried "placenta pots" under entrances to their houses and used large inverted pots for remains of the dead, chiefly those of children.

Placenta burial is ethnologically known to have been practiced in the Suwa region of Nagano.[27] However, the discovery of traces of an infant in a pot found in Miyagidai of Suwa City supports the claim that such pots were used primarily as burial jars. The practice of burying remains in inverted pots spread from the mountains into the Kantō and, before the end of Middle Jōmon, as far north as Morioka in Akita Prefecture. Such pots have no bases or have holes drilled in their bottoms, as though ritually "killed" and made unfit for any other use. At inland sites the remains of adults may have been placed in enlarged postholes of abandoned house pits located on the fringe of a village. Location no. 7 of the International Christian University site (in Mitaka City of metropolitan Tokyo) had impractically large postholes in two house pits. The floors of these houses were heaped with broken pots and other debris, apparently disposed of there by the villagers. On the floors of the houses are sometimes found scores of chipped stone axes or adzes made of materials ranging from slate or sandstone to the harder andesite and hornfels. Over three hundred have been recorded for the floor of a single house, suggesting a great deal of breakage and replacement. Most retain a cortex, that is, a part of the original water-worn surface.

Arrowheads are chiefly of obsidian or chert in V or triangular shapes. They are rather small in the Chūbu and Kantō areas but somewhat larger in Tōhoku and southern Hokkaidō. The stone spoon (*ishisaji*) is a small stemmed knife that perhaps originated in the north during Earliest Jōmon. By Middle Jōmon it had become larger and was often made of poorer stone. At first, the knife was perhaps used as a scraper and cutter of skin and meat, but by the Middle Jōmon it may also have become a reaper or peeler.[28] Hammers and grinding stones for cracking and pulverizing nuts are common.

The effort expended in digging the ground, cutting trees, and preparing food produced sturdy physiques, and as people's muscles enlarged, so did the bones to sustain them. Hard manual work, such as kneading clay for making pots, pounding and grinding nuts and starchy plants, was done by women. This exercise lengthened their clavicles (collarbones). But the heavier work and other activity that

27 Fujimori Eiichi, *Jōmon no sekai* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1969), p. 214.

28 Fujimori Eiichi, "Jomon chūki ni okeru ishisaji no kinōteki henka ni tsuite," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 49 (1963): 35–43.

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resulted in broken bones took its toll on five times as many men as women.[29] Softer foods and improved tools spared teeth from the inordinate wear experienced by their ancestors, leaving men at this time with slightly better teeth than women, perhaps due to the latter's loss of calcium during pregnancy. Middle to Late Jōmon dentition shows a very high level of carbohydrate consumption.[30]

Serious environmental deterioration began around 2400 B.C.[31] Excessive rains for consecutive seasons ruined the nut crops and disheartened the populace, which had little choice but to go elsewhere. Most settled in the lower river valleys and near the coast, abandoning their montane practices and turning to seafood for basic diet. From a high of 2,995 sites in the Chūbu, the number plummeted to 918 in the Late Jōmon and to 250 in the Latest Jōmon.

The Late Jōmon stage (ca. 2400–1000 B.C.)

Such unsettled conditions characterized the early centuries of the Late Jōmon stage, as the search for adequate subsistence intensified. But the moves of people into other regions, which had begun several hundred years earlier, was the reverse of what had occurred at the beginning of the Middle Jōmon. Kasori E type pottery was therefore far more widely distributed than any type found in the earlier half of the Middle Jōmon, appearing in areas from the Kinki to southern Tōhoku. The total number of known sites throughout the country dropped by 39 percent, as the middle areas of Japan were depleted by emigrations to the Kinki, Chūgoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu. In south Japan the number of Middle Jōmon sites was low but more than doubled in Late Jōmon. There was a 10 percent increase in the north, where 27.23 percent of all Late Jōmon sites are located. Such mobility had the effect of eroding regional distinctions and mixing local traits. Cord marking, the trademark of Jōmon pottery, was finally introduced to Kyushu, and a special kind of decoration confined to zoned areas on the vessels, known as erased cord marking (*surikeshi jōmon*), was used all over the country, making it the most common of Jōmon pottery styles.

29 Tamotsu Ogata, "Physical Changes in Man During the Jomon Period of Japan in Accordance with the Climatic and Geological Alterations," in *Anthropology*, vol. 1 of *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* (Tokyo: Science Council of Japan, 1968), 95–97.

30 Christy G. Turner, II, "Dental Anthropological Indications of Agriculture Among Jomon People of Central Japan," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 51 (November 1979): 633.

31 Tsukada Matsuo, *Kafun wa kataru* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1974), pp. 177–8.

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Coastal communities expanded, leaving the remains of many immense kitchen middens. One of the two Kasori shell mounds is 170 meters long, and the other 100. Middens are scattered around bays and major rivers, largely in north, east, and south Japan. A few have been found in such scattered areas as Hokkaido; on the Sanriku coast of north Honshū and Matsushima Bay; along the Tone, Ara, Tama, Tsurumi, Ōoka, Hanamizu, and Sagami rivers of the Kantō; in the Atsumi and Ise bays of the south Tōkai coast; along the Inland Sea; around the Ariake and Kagoshima bays of Kyushu; and on islands farther south. The generally rugged, beachless Japan Sea coast has very few middens. Rings on shells show that most of the clamming was done in early and late spring (65 percent) followed by late summer (15 percent). Larger fishhooks were used, and detachable barbed harpoon heads were developed in north Japan. Deep-sea fish, especially tuna (*maguro*) and bonito (*katsuo*) supplemented the supply of inshore fish. Porpoises, salmon, and trout were important food sources for the northern population. Dugout canoes, in some cases made by burning out logs, were about six meters long and paddled with one or more oars, aided by some kind of outrigger. Deer and boar bones are rather common in Late Jōmon sites, but gradually deer disappeared from northern areas, perhaps because of overhunting. Fewer boar bones are found in the Latest Jōmon sites. By and large, the acquisition of food had a seasonal cycle, beginning with clamming in the spring and continuing with fishing in the summer, nut gathering in the fall, and hunting in the winter.

Most Late Jōmon villages continued to be occupied into the Latest Jōmon phase. Their shallow pit houses have been hard to locate. In the Kantō, one or more in a group of about ten had floors that were paved with smooth stones. These appear to have been houses of shaman chiefs, as some contained phalli and abnormally shaped pots; but not all of these floors had holes for posts, and some may have been open places for communal rites.

In the Late Jōmon, chipped stone axes – profuse in the Middle Jōmon – virtually disappeared. There was less need for them in coastal areas, and food gathering elsewhere was more diversified. The few found are often not large, and some are pecked, ground, and polished. Most are broken. Arrowheads may be tanged and were used with a one-piece bow about a meter in length, a weapon thought to have had a range of between fifty and sixty meters. Because small points could not have been very effective against large creatures, they were probably tipped with alkaloid poison from the root of aconite

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(ranunculaceous genus), a poison so deadly that only 0.4 grams is required to dispatch an animal weighing up to 50 kilograms (a small deer). Aconite grew throughout the country in cooler times; nowadays it is limited chiefly to north Japan, and its use has been declared illegal.

The rugged flamboyance of Middle Jōmon pottery was replaced by trim shapes and modest linear decoration in Late Jōmon. Pots, vases, bowls, ewers and a few bizarre shapes were now made in manageable sizes, all with thin walls of rather fine clay and, in contrast with those of the Middle Jōmon, with decorations that reveal an appreciation of shape. Somewhat more controlled firing produced a dirt brown color. Red paint was occasionally applied, for either decoration or waterproofing. Northern pieces were often polished. Zoned cord marking continued into Latest Jōmon, except in Kyushu where it was rapidly replaced by black polished walls of the Goryō type of pottery. Goryō is radically different, looking as though an effort was made to simulate metal. It is concentrated in central Kyushu, not in the north. Without clear Jōmon antecedents, it must reflect the influences of China's Black Pottery, introduced – as rice may have been – directly from the Chinese east coast. Kantō sites often yield vessels with mat marks on their bases, defined sharply enough to allow us to recognize many different weaves at a single site. Basketry was a developed but still unsystematized art, each maker evidently searching for the most satisfactory weave.

Clothes are thought to have been made from long narrow strips of mulberry bark removed from young trees. These supple strips were rendered more pliable by light pounding on a stone and woven into serviceable, long, sacklike vests. The straw rainwear cape worn until recently by farmers is a relic of this style.

Social development is reflected in the ritual use of open and centrally located spaces between houses, the emergence of the cemetery concept, and the construction of stone circles in north Japan. The Kainohana shell mound north of Matsudo City in Chiba Prefecture contained the discards of people from Middle through Latest Jōmon.[32] At least thirty-five house pits have been identified. Among the shells is the usual selection of bones: those of turtles, whales, dolphins, monkeys, and birds. Fish bones are fewer than expected, considering the large number of net weights. Many ritual objects have been recovered from the site, mostly taken from the communal space of public use.

32 Bunkazai hogo iinkai, *Kainohana kaizuka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1973).

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Such objects include eight stone phalli, thirteen stone swords (*sekiken:* shafts with an elliptical section narrowed to a blade along one edge), twenty-seven perforated clay disks, sixteen clay plaques, and sixteen clay figurines. Toward the end of the Latest Jōmon, a much smaller population seems to have used the space more intensively, as more of the ritual objects found there belong to this period.

Two houses – perhaps those of successive Late and Latest Jōmon shaman/chiefs – with Horinouchi and Angyō pottery, contained several ritual objects. One had three stone phalli, two figurines, one plaque, and four fragmentary stone swords, and the other had four figurines, two clay plaques, two perforated clay disks, and four chunks of stone swords.

Dozens of figurines are often recovered from large shell mounds, which probably means that by this time almost every household possessed one. Zoomorphisms of mountain types gave way to more obvious human features, as if interest in the fertility of nature as a whole had shifted to the fertility of humans. Several figures of north Japan are of persons in a squatting position, perhaps representing childbirth or flexed burials. Those may have been used for facilitating childbirth and simulating interments or as effigies for the exercise of sympathetic magic when attempting to cure a person's sickness.

The skeletal remains in many shell mounds are concentrated in "cemeteries," sometimes in pairs within a "reserved" area, such as that at Ebijima in Iwate Prefecture. By devoting a special area to burials, Late Jōmon people were isolating the dead, allowing the gap to be bridged by mediums who eventually drew the rational world of the living further away from the spirit world of the dead. This development is undoubtedly related in some way to an increasingly large number of skeletons painted with red ochre (evidence of secondary burials) and to a trend toward burial in a flexed position. Whether the paint was seen as a preservative or a simulation of blood (the substance of life), whether flexed positions suggested the completion of a life cycle, or whether a corpse was wrapped in order to prevent a return to life, considerable religious evolution is indicated. But flexed burials never became exclusive. Tsugumo had 179 skeletons, but after archaeological recording became more thorough, a precise tabulation of burial positions shows that 55 out of 57 were flexed. In the Latest Jōmon, the Yoshigo shell mound of Aichi where 307 burials were counted, 148 out of 161 in-place skeletons were flexed.[33] A majority lay in an easterly

33 Bunkazai hogo iinkai, *Yoshigo kaizuka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1952).

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direction. At both Tsugumo and Yoshigo, shell bracelets and clay earrings were associated with female skeletons, probably symbolizing social status.

Another ritual practice, for which a southern origin has been claimed even though it is found no farther south than the Inland Sea, was the removal and filing of teeth. This was done at an early age, apparently no later than the age of about fifteen, and about 70 percent of the total were males. The practice moved into the Tōkai, Kantō, and south Tōhoku from Early Jōmon onward, reaching a peak in Latest Jōmon. It was especially popular in the south Tōkai region. In about 20 individuals at the Ikawatsu shell mound in Aichi, the canines are usually missing and the incisors filed. At the Yoshigo shell mound, 114 out of 121 skeletons had some teeth knocked out, but only four had undergone filing, two men and two women. In no group of burials is the practice consistent, and in some shell mounds it is totally absent. Such inconsistencies are best explained by intermarriage between practicing and nonpracticing neighbors.

Late Jōmon inhabitants of north Japan left the remains of many sacred areas encircled with stones. Although the stones close to the surface have often been removed by farmers who saw them only as nuisances, over thirty such sites still exist. Stone placements are thought to have been connected somehow with the salmon-fishing season, and some with cemeteries as well. The most spectacular circles are at Ōyu in Akita Prefecture, where thousands of stones form two huge pairs of concentric circles about eighty meters apart.[34] Set between each pair are stones in the shape of a sundial, having one centrally upright stone with other stones radiating from it like the spokes of a wheel. These "sundial" circles have been given calendrical value. It is usually believed that whatever their use, the stones were brought from a river and put in place before the fishing season and that many dead were buried in rectangular pits within such stone rings. It may be assumed that people were drawn to the rings each year for seasonal rites. The ceremonial theory is reinforced by the lack of ordinary residences in that neighborhood and by the presence of Late Jōmon pottery that is small and of strange and nonutilitarian shapes.

Both signs of minor specialization in crafts and clearer forms of communication were now beginning to appear. Clusters of similar objects exceeding local needs, in various states of completion, or made of materials from distant places are the best evidence. For example,

34 Bunkazai hogo iinkai, *Ōyu-machi kanjō resseki* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1953).

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the Shōmyōji shell mound in Kanagawa Prefecture yielded far more fishhooks than would be expected for the size of that community, leading to the conclusion that fishhooks were made available to neighbors. Kainohana had tools of different kinds of stone from several, quite diverse sources. Elsewhere, pots for salt evaporation have been identified. Dried seafoods, including seaweed, from the coast must have been exchanged for obsidian and perhaps bone and horn artifacts from inland areas. Asphalt, used for repairing clay pots and figurines and for attaching spearheads and arrowheads, comes from only a few places in Akita, and yet objects touched with asphalt are distributed all over the Tōhoku region.

The Latest Jōmon stage (ca. 1000–300 B.C.)

The conventional view is that in south Japan, the Latest Jōmon period began around 1000 B.C. and ended in the third century B.C., at about the time that rice and perhaps metals were introduced. But discoveries of the last decade may force a revision of stages, especially in Kyushu where economic changes were beginning to occur. The north continued to have a large number of sites dating from the Latest Jōmon. A phenomenal 52.47 percent of Latest Jōmon sites are in the Tōhoku, whereas the Kantō – farther south – has an all-time low of 10.24 percent. From a countrywide total of 6,687 sites for Late Jōmon, the number dropped to 3,135 in Latest Jōmon. Life in the north was not uncomfortable during this fairly warm stage. The ample supply of horse chestnuts, chestnuts, and walnuts was augmented by deer, salmon, and other seafoods. Evidence of forest destruction around some sites suggests a dynamic balance between a gathering economy and a limited plant-manipulating one. Shell mounds on marshy and high-ground sites contain great quantities of finely fashioned small, polished, burnished, or lacquer-painted vessels, many demonstrating a ritual use. Each member of the family may have had his or her own cup or bowl. Other, usually larger, vessels were made for heavier domestic use. Figurines are numerous in both Kantō and Tōhoku sites, some being hollow and frequently in quite grotesque shapes. The well-known "goggle-eyed" type includes a few rather large examples.

The northern culture of this stage, including that of south Hokkaido (known as Kamegaoka after a site in northern Aomori Prefecture), is today thought to have contained the distinctive life-styles of these people whose pottery typology is that of the Ōbora shell mounds in the southeast corner of Iwate Prefecture. House pits are rarely found

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there, and settlement plans are not clear. The dwellings may have been constructed on the surface with Ainu-style Y-fork posts and horizontally laid poles for floors and roofs.

Lacquer (*Rhus vernicifera*) was by now a specialized art. Applied to red ochre pigment on pottery and wood, it may have been used first for waterproofing, but its decorative potential was soon recognized, causing its value to rise. The low, damp sites have produced lacquer combs and baskets, most notably a ceremonial lacquered "sword." After the Jōmon period, preference was given to black lacquer.

Kyushu's population expanded considerably in consequence of Late Jōmon immigration. From the record low of 2.3 percent (221) of all Middle Jōmon sites, the proportion of Kyushu sites rose to 6.27 percent (419) in Late Jōmon and to 8.26 percent (261) in Latest Jōmon. Pressure on available resources mounted, and searches were initiated for additional sources of food. Interior Kantō was apparently on the verge of exhaustion, its floral replenishment too sluggish after ten thousand years. The region's larger Late Jômon population seems to have been too much for it. But Kyushu's proximity to the continent was a major geographical asset.

Southwest Japan was then wet and cool. Rice (*Oryza sativa*) grain imprints have been noticed on Latest Jōmon pottery from eleven sites, eight of which are in Kyushu.[35] The first rice pollen was accompanied by a striking increase of weeds (*Artemisia*), the usual testimony to some forest reduction. There was no native rice, but rice pollen was much in evidence by about 500 B.C., accompanied by Yūsu-type pottery. There is now good evidence for advances beyond what had been assumed. The discovery in 1978 of scores of footprints in a rice paddy at the Itazuke site in Fukuoka, at a level associated with Yūsu pottery, requires a reevaluation of this Jōmon stage and perhaps a different beginning point for the Yayoi period, if not a redefinition of Yayoi culture. These footprints were made by a man, a woman, and a seven- or eight-year-old child working in a slushy-bottomed rice paddy that had been drained and dried out before being buried by later soil deposits. The big toes in these prints project at a sharp angle, unlike those of any known Japanese feet. The failure to wear slippers or shoes does not explain their grotesque shape, which might have been caused if clogs with thick, wedge-shaped thongs had been used almost as soon as a child could walk.

A good case has been made for the light cultivation of native millet,

35 Satō Toshiya, *Nihon no kodai mai* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1971), pp. 77–80.

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hardy grain *Gramineae* plants called *hie* (*Echinochloa frumentacea*) and *awa* (*Setaria italica*). Barley (*Hordeum*) is also identified with the Latest Jōmon period, and shortly after Itazuke (the important transitional Jōmon-to-Yayoi site) in Fukuoka Prefecture, a modest amount of wheat (*Triticum*) was being grown.[36]

The Jōmon people were once identified with the Ainu, now occupying parts of Hokkaido and often regarded as having northern caucasoid connections. This view has been revised somewhat, and archaeologists now consider only the Latest Jōmon culture of the north as Ainu, who can probably be associated with the historic Ezo or Emishi, people who first appeared in Japanese literature as settlers in scattered pockets. As a group, they were seen as a threat to Japanese expansion only in the north. After a century of warfare, they slowly fell back, having suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Japanese armies toward the end of the eighth century. They remained in the Tōhoku region, according to much more recent historical records.

Archaeologically, the Ezo had many cultural features in common with the Japanese, but as they withdrew into Hokkaido, they remained at a hunting-and-gathering stage of development, although they may have made some major contributions to early Japanese thought, especially to views of the spirit world. Nonetheless, the Japanese ignored them as long as Hokkaido was thought to be devoid of resources. The discovery of rich coal mines and a rice-growing potential radically changed that attitude in the nineteenth century, however.

The Ainu skeletons are distant from those of modern Japanese, but physical anthropologists regard the Jōmon population as osteologically rather close to the Hokkaido Ainu and the upper Paleolithic Eurasian population.[37] It should be remembered that migrations into Japan came through two and sometimes three points of entry. There was relatively little mixing; otherwise the pottery typology would be less complex. Physical differences in the Jōmon period people were not very great and resulted primarily from improved nourishment and greater exercise, not from racial mixing. The skulls are almost brachy-

36 Kokawa Shōhei, "Shokubutsu-sei ibutsu ni yoru kodaijin no seikatsu to kankyō ni tsuite no kenkyū," *Shizenkagaku no shuhō ni yoru iseki kobunkazai no kenkyū*, 1976 Reports, B-5 (Tokyo: Kobunkazai kenkyūkai, 1977), pp. 1–13; Kotani Yoshinobu, "Implications of Cereal Grains from Uenoharu, Kumamoto," *Jinruigaku zasshi* 80 (June 1972): 159–62.

37 Ainu and "Japanese" can be differentiated by skeletal material. The Ainu were apparently one surviving group of various non-Japanese populations in pre-Yayoi Japan. See William W. Howells, "Craniometry and Multivariate Analysis: The Jomon Population of Japan," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University* 57 (1966): 3, 36–38; Yamaguchi Bin, "Physical Anthropology of the Jomon Population," *Proceedings of the Thirty-first International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa* 2 (1984): 927.

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cranic after Middle Jōmon. Tsugumo and Yoshigo people had an average height of 157 to 158 centimeters, somewhat shorter than Hirasaka people. Some physical anthropologists tend to see much physical continuity from Jōmon to historical times, maintaining that the changes were of degree, not of kind. Never was a local population overwhelmed or supplanted by enough newcomers to cause distinctive change.[38]

THE YAYOI PERIOD

Japan entered the civilized orbit of east Asia with the appearance of rice-growing villages and the use of iron near the beginning of what is known archaeologically as the Yayoi period. The Chinese referred to these agricultural islanders as Wo (J: Wa), long before the people apparently had a word for identifying themselves. China's interest in its neighbors to the northeast emerged from cultural curiosity and trading interests. Yayoi corresponds roughly to the Former and Later Han dynasties of China (206 B.C. to A.D. 220), although Yayoi began somewhat earlier and ended a century or more later.

The name *Yayoi* comes from Yayoi-chō, a northern section of the University of Tokyo campus. Late in the nineteenth century, an army firing range was situated opposite the back gate of the university overlooking the town of Nezu. The small Mukōgaoka shell mound lay just northwest of the range in a grassy area normally populated by rabbits and raccoon-dogs. Archaeologists excavated there several times. The first pot uncovered is listed in one of the digger's memoirs as a find of 1884. But the Yayoi name of the area entered geography books somewhat later.

Initial study made it clear that Yayoi materials were not Jōmon, but more than half a century passed before these Yayoi finds were dated and their significance was recognized. A formal report was not made to the Archaeological Association until March 1, 1923, after a lapse of time that attests to the quandary that the findings created. For a long time the period even lacked a name. Neil Gordon Munro excavated another site to verify his suspicions regarding their distinctiveness. In his massive corpus *Prehistoric Japan* (1911), he called the period Intermediate and described its bronze bells and weapons in his Yamato section, associating them with later mounded tombs. The landmark discovery of Yayoi culture came in 1943 with the finding of and subsequent ambitious excavation of the Toro village site in south Shizuoka City. (See Map 1.2.)

38 Suzuki Hisashi, *Hone* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1960), pp. 51–68.

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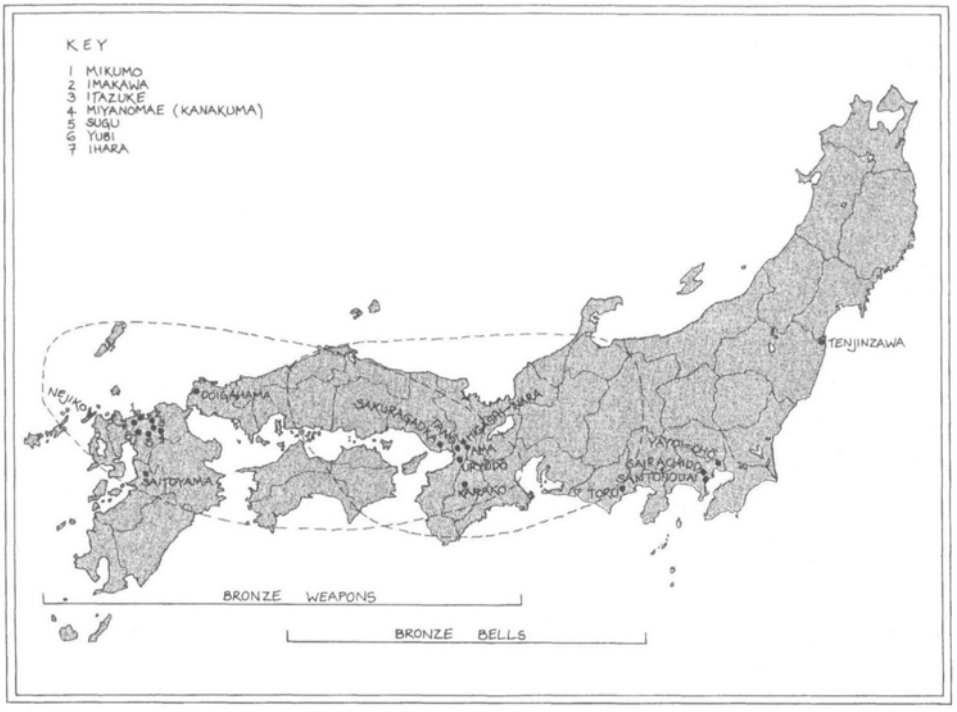

Map 1.2 Yayoi period sites and concentration areas of bronze weapons and bells.

As a result of such developments, this period – frequently referred to as the first stage of Japanese history – has become the subject of intensive historical study.

Speculation on the origins of the Yayoi culture has given rise to theories ranging from foreign invasion to indigenous development. Virtually all cultural features of the period were introduced from China and Korea through north Kyushu, and arrived at irregular intervals over hundreds of years. The Latest Jōmon sites in the Tsukushi area of Kyushu total only 106 (Nagasaki: 40, Saga: 16, Fukuoka: 50), but the number of Yayoi sites (within only five hundred years) rose sharply to 681 (252, 172, and 257, respectively). Eventually more Yayoi sites were found farther south (Kumamoto: 472, Kagoshima: 588, Miyazaki: 94) where rice did well under warmer conditions but where metal was virtually nonexistent. The three thousand or four thousand inhabitants associated with the 261 sites (scattered around the island of Kyushu) of the waning Jōmon centuries were not numerous enough to resist invasion.

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One view of Yayoi culture that once caught the popular imagination – like the theory of a later "invasion" of Japan by horse riders – is that it is connected with the Hsu Fu naval expedition dispatched by Ch'in Shih-huang-ti in 219 B.C. to search for the Taoist isles of the immortals. This was an elaborately mounted and well-stocked expedition, lacking nothing, as the romanticized story goes. Hsu Fu reappeared some nine years later with a request for more bowmen, and his description of the islands he visited fits Japan. But iron and bronze did not arrive in Japan at the same time, not even as close as the nine years between the two visits. Even less likely is the introduction of rice by Hsu Fu, as his fleet departed from the Shantung coast, far north of the rice-growing areas of China.

The indigenous development theory, based on such ideas as the cultivation of wild-rice seeds that had drifted to Japan, can be disposed of in fewer lines. It presupposes a culture of considerable vigor, which is far from the case. The Jōmon culture of south Japan was debilitated, virtually exhausted. Desperation could not have led the people to domesticate nonexistent plants or to produce iron and bronze without technological tutoring. The "woman's knife," a continental reaper, was introduced, but surely not for harvesting domestic plants.

The beginnings of rice cultivation and metallurgy

Yayoi culture is complex because its earliest elements arrived from continental fringe areas where unsinicized cultures are harder to define. Other elements came from Korea and from areas where the Han dynasty had consolidated its control and established an intricate network of trade. Yayoi culture replaced that of the Jōmon in north Kyushu but did not supplant the people, adding depth to existing Jōmon traditions as it moved up the island of Honshu. In cooler areas fewer inhabitants felt that rice was essential to existence, especially because the effort required to grow rice was too great for the results achieved.

An accelerated pace of change on the continent hastened human displacement during the two centuries that followed the collapse of the Chou dynasty, the centralization of the Ch'in, and the empire building of the Han. Japan had always received its share of refugees and advantages from the violence of China's dynastic upheavals. The establishment of commanderies in north Korea under the domination of Lo-lang in 108 B.C. placed Japan in touch with a major distribution center

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of Chinese goods and, as long as Korea remained friendly, offered a port to port trip to China that was safer than crossing the open sea.

Local pottery typology, imported Chinese bronze mirrors, and associated Korean artifacts (such as stone replicas of daggers in both Korean and Japanese sites) help date Yayoi artifacts in Kyushu. Fragments of iron and bronze weapons, bronze mirrors, and spinning equipment of Former Han times (first and second centuries B.C.) allow us to place related finds in Early Yayoi. Later Han mirrors and other Chinese artifacts of the first century A.D., on the other hand, permit us to place related finds in the Middle Yayoi period, during which the Yayoi culture moved up the Inland Sea to the Kinki and Tōkai regions and beyond. The major period of Yayoi expansion into the Kantō and Tōhoku continued from Middle to Late Yayoi, with rice cultivation moving rapidly to more distant regions than was once thought. It was being cultivated in northern Tōhoku before the Yayoi period came to a close.

Early Yayoi Ongagawa types of pottery, named after a river in northeast Fukuoka Prefecture, are distributed in sites all the way from north Kyushu to the Inland Sea and the Kinki, reaching Shizuoka on the Tōkai coast. Beyond Shizuoka lay dense cryptomeria forests, which formed a rather strong deterrent to land clearance for farming and beyond which Jōmon traditions were deeply entrenched.

The Yūsu pottery, the Latest Jōmon type of north Kyushu, is difficult to separate from the earliest Yayoi type. Gradually the firing of Yayoi pottery became more standardized, and finished products took on a rather consistent reddish brown color. Every family seems to have filled its basic needs by making pots for cooking and storage, later on producing ritual stands and vessels. Storage pots are the trademark of Yayoi culture.

Excavations at several very large Yayoi period sites, usually made before constructing a highway or urban housing complex, have opened up new perspectives on the spread of rice cultivation and satellite villages, as well as on changing burial practices and the consolidation of tribal groups. The commonly held view that the Jōmon and Yayoi people sought out different environments because of different life-sustaining needs has been disputed as a result of finds at two large sites that contained both Jōmon and Yayoi remains: the Kusakari shell mound of Ichihara City in Chiba Prefecture, a site where a 100,000-square-meter area was excavated in 1983, disclosing 270 pit houses, of which 76 were Late Yayoi, with the remainder Jōmon, and the Higu-

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chi Naijōkan community site of Tatsuno City in Nagano Prefecture where 133 pit dwellings were uncovered, 66 of which were Yayoi, with the remainder Jōmon (57), Burial Mound (2), and Heian (8).

Investigations made at two other large sites have produced valuable data on burial practices over a considerable length of time: (1) the Uenodaira site near Yamanashi City, which contained over 100 Yayoi graves, and (2) the Hattori site of Moriyama City in Shiga Prefecture, lying along the Noshū River, where an area of 360,000 square meters was excavated and yielded 360 graves, mostly dating from the Middle Yayoi.

In the Kantō and southern Tōhoku, as well as at a few sites in the Chūbu region, burial systems have been found that evolved in late Jōmon times and continued into the Middle Yayoi, when they were replaced by trenchlike burials grouped in squares. Human bones were squeezed into narrow-necked jars that were then placed in a ring inside round pits. The Tenjimmae site in Sakura in Chiba Prefecture has seven pits, six of which contained nine burial jars each. At the relatively small site at Izuruhara (684 square meters) in Sano in Tochigi Prefecture were found thirty-seven burial pits, some of which were filled with burial jars.

For the earliest stage of Japanese cultivation, rice growing had to have been introduced from some area in the temperate zone between about the thirtieth and thirty-fourth parallels, a zone that only touches south Korea. For Japan it can be traced to the Yangtze delta region, occupied during the Chou ascendancy by the Wu and Yueh kingdoms. Yueh had absorbed Wu by the late Chou and was in turn absorbed by the central state of Ch'u in 334 B.C. (Some of the phonetic elements of the Japanese language have been linked to the speech of this area.)

Rice was dried, sometimes toasted, and could be efficiently stored in compact spaces. But it was especially attractive to egg-laying moths. The later Yayoi people devised elevated storehouses to counter the humidity of summer rains and the predations of field mice. Carbonized rice and pots with rice imprints are not at all infrequent in Yayoi sites because of the toasting process. Toward the end of the period, many sites yield *tategine* (straight wooden pounding sticks shaped like elongated dumbbells) that were used for pulverizing grass to fertilize seedling beds.

Japanese rice is short grained, awned, and highly nutritious. The highest yield in the monsoon region comes from flooded paddy fields of transplanted seedlings. Kyushu and Chūgoku rice tended to be thicker grained than Tōkai and Kantō rice, due either to the existence

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of a variety adapted to slightly cooler conditions in the east or to less sunshine during the growing season.[39]

Paddy farming is the hallmark of Japanese agriculture, but rice production at first included both marsh and dry-field planting. In Kyushu and elsewhere, rice was only one of several food-production systems of the Early Yayoi period. A number of shell mounds of that stage have been found. Dwelling sites like Itazuke in Fukuoka have yielded shells and the bones of boar and deer. With the passage of time, Itazuke pollen becomes more frequently that of rice, water plants, and *pinus* and less often the forest pollen of chinkapin and oak. Pine always multiplied in the wake of much forest clearing. Other sites show comparable environmental change.[40]

The first agricultural communities

Itazuke, the site of a substantial Yayoi community, is situated south of the present Fukuoka airport along the left bank of the Mikasa River. Artifacts have been surfacing in that area for about a century. Excavation at several places was started in the 1950s and has continued with increasing interest, once Itazuke was recognized as a threshhold site of Yayoi culture.[41] It was inhabited in Earliest Jōmon times, in the Latest Jōmon phase, and again in Early and Middle Yayoi. There are many pits for storage and burial, but none is positively for a dwelling. Surface dwellings may have been preferred, as depressed floors would have been too damp for comfort; thus no settlement pattern is revealed.

Much of the Itazuke pottery is marginally Latest Jōmon or Early Yayoi, with coarse surface scraping and notched ridges around the necks of vessels. Storage pots with lids, however, have distinctive Yayoi shapes. Wooden stakes were used to outline rice fields. A long, surrounding ditch has been identified as either a water supply system or a defensive moat. Cultivating was done with wooden rakes and hoes. Iron tools were essential to all woodworking, but as yet no iron scraps have been found. Stone lunate reapers with paired holes (the "woman's knife"), roughly polished axes, and clay spindle whorls were the tools used in this new style of life, signs of economic and cultural advance.

In the north part of the Itazuke site, occupying an irregular area of slightly higher ground roughly forty by sixty meters in dimensions, lay

39 Satō, *Nihon no kodai mai*, p. 74. 40 Yasuda, "Prehistoric Environment," p. 242.
41 Fukuoka-shi kyōiku iinkai, *Itazuke* (Fukuoka: Chūetsu Fukuoka kojō, 1976).

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an isolated cemetery. It contained sixty-three jar burials and fifty rectangular pits, at least a dozen of which were obviously designed to accommodate wooden coffins. Thirty-seven of the jar burials are thought to have been for children and twenty-six for adults, the children usually in one jar and the adults in paired jars whose openings were sealed with clay. Most of the rectangular pits were oriented north and south, but either style might run in any direction.

Jar burials were extremely popular in Middle Yayoi and were at first laid horizontally, as at Itazuke. Later, and in order to counter the weight of the earth above, they were set at an angle and finally buried upright, mouths turned down. Bones painted red have been found at some sites but not at Itazuke. By Late Yayoi, simple pits for mat-wrapped bodies had become common. A two-stage burial system continued from Jōmon times onward. Cemeteries average about ten jars each in southwest Japan, but occasionally some were much larger. Yoshinogari in Saga had about two thousand. The Kanenokuma graveyard in Fukuoka contained 145 burial jars, both single and double, dating from Early to Late Yayoi. A small number of jar burials have been found in the Kinki, chiefly for the remains of children.

Some jars of the Middle Yayoi period, such as those at Sugu in Fukuoka, are enormous in size and are seen as products of quasi-commercial activity by specialized potters. In a few sites in north Kyushu, clustered jars were covered with immense stones in dolmen-like formations, apparently following a Korean practice. Stone cists in west Honshū, north Kyushu, and on the islands in the Korean strait are also of a type introduced from Korea. Though somewhat more pretentious than jars, they rarely contain grave goods.

Cemeteries with several kinds of burials reflect differences of age, status, sex, and ethnic background, or combinations thereof. Doigahama in Yamaguchi Prefecture is a case in point. Dating from the second half of Early Yayoi, it is variously said to have included 121, over 150, or more than 200 skeletons.[42] The majority lay in extended positions with their heads pointing east. Five scattered stone cists were more or less in the middle of the cemetery and contained the skeletons of adults. Only these included burial goods – articles of jasper and shell ornaments. Some female skeletons found in cists lay at the feet of male skeletons, and one stone cist had been lengthened to accommo-

42 Patricia Hitchins, "Technical Studies on Materials from Yayoi Period Japan: Their Role in Archaeological Interpretation," *Asian Perspectives* 19 (1978): 159 (more than 150); Hiroshi Kanaseki and Makoto Sahara, "The Yayoi Period," *Asian Perspectives* 19 (1978): 24 (more than 200). Expanded digging since 1953 has revealed consistently more human remains.

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date nine bodies. About sixty-nine men, twenty-eight women, and most of the children were buried in the cemetery to the east, and eleven men and thirteen women were placed to the north. Teeth mutilation was still extensively practiced. A recognizable degree of segregation is thought to indicate distinctions between blood relatives and outsiders married into the group, an idea supported by practices that have survived in western Japan until modern times.[43]

Recent interest in a possible association of Yayoi burials with later mounded tombs, and in the origin of the latter, has focused attention on rectangular pits grouped in squares, now referred to as "square-moated graves." Because these are more prominent in the Kinki, connections between the two forms of burial seem more likely there. At Ama and Uryūdō in Osaka, Saikachido in Kanagawa, and even in southern Tōhoku, communities buried some of their dead in rectangular pits, with the four sides paralleling those of a square mound surrounded by a ditch. A pit center may have been used initially for a single wooden coffin burial, but the usual form was that of a square outlined with bodies. Rather deep burials left few visible surface traces, but what is known places them closer to the Yayoi tradition of subsurface burial than to the later "hilltop" style of the early mounded tombs.

Objects found in or near jar burials of north Kyushu (*pi* of glass, Han mirrors, jade beads, bronze halberds and swords) are similar to goods put in Chinese graves of north Korea, except for the weapons. These were symbols of status and were, in all likelihood, personal treasures deposited in the graves of north Kyushu owners.

Large quantities of bronze objects were excavated from north Fukuoka sites as early as the eighteenth century: Ihara (1781–8), fifty mirrors; Mikumo (1822), thirty-five mirrors; and Sugu (1899), over twenty mirrors.[44] The Sugu material has been better preserved and is therefore better known. It includes bronze daggers, halberds, sandstone molds for weapons, jade objects, and burial jars. Such a concentration of wealth has aroused a great deal of speculation about this possibly being the location of Yamatai, the kingdom of Japan described by Chinese historians in the *Wei-chih* section on the country of Wo (Wa).

Such burial sites signify great cultural change. What may at first

43 Kanaseki and Sahara, "The Yayoi Period," p. 25.

44 Shimada Sadahiko and Umehara Sueji, "Chikuzen Sugu shizen iseki no kenkyū," *Kyōto teikoku daigaku bungakubu kōkogaku kenkyū hōkoku* 11 (Kyoto: Kyōto teikoku daigaku, 1930), pp. 40–55.

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have been little more than burials for settlements of shipwrecked fishermen became, by Middle Yayoi, communities of farmers with social elites or entrepreneurs owning and accumulating through trade certain status symbols that suggest a sharpened awareness of economic differences in an early step toward social stratification.

Two Late Jōmon sites in Kyushu – Obarushita and Ikada in Nagasaki Prefecture – have reportedly produced iron objects, but most archaeologists have been skeptical about the appearance of iron before Yayoi and have considered the bladelike items taken from the Early Yayoi Saitoyama site in Kumamoto Prefecture to be the oldest-known evidence of iron in Japan.[45] A more recent find of an iron sword lying at the side of a skeleton in a wooden coffin in the large cemetery of the Okamoto-chō, 4-chōme, site of Kasuga City, Fukuoka Prefecture, is at least as old. Both are thought to belong to the second century B.C. The Chinese people's experience with high-fired ceramics had led them to cast iron at temperatures over 1,300°C. This also was the method first used by the Japanese, although forging would have been far more suitable for their level of technological achievement. Most early Yayoi artifacts, of Chinese-style foundry-made iron, were probably items of trade, but after the Chinese began to forge iron in the Han dynasty – associated with their phenomenal military progress – the forging process reached Japan. Very little Early Yayoi iron has been found in Japan. A tabulation of Kyushu sites made in 1974 shows that a total of 157 Middle Yayoi iron items and 118 Late Yayoi ones have been found.[46] But iron is deceptive. Unlike bronze, its deterioration is extremely rapid under the moist conditions of Japan, and given a prolonged period of erosion, much of it may have disappeared.

The argument that most iron goods were objects of trade is based on the observation that the greater the distance is from points of entry, the fewer iron objects will be found. But one suspects that the phenomenal increase from Early to Middle Yayoi cannot be explained simply in terms of trade with Chinese colonies. The more extensive use of native ore for forging iron must have been a primary factor. Iron axes, for example, were modeled on a finely developed continental style of stone axe that was by then being locally made. As their production increased, the number of stone axes decreased. The inevitable search for ore must have spurred a rather rapid expansion of rice

45 Mori Kōichi, ed., *Tetsu* (Tokyo: Shakai shisōsha, 1974), pp. 20–21.
46 Kubota Kurao, *Tetsu kō kogaku* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1974), p. 59.

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cultivation in new areas, and the digging of wells made it possible for innumerable branch communities to grow rice on higher ground. It is believed that even small and remote villages used iron tools.

Iron may have been imported from the "iron mountains" of Korea, but the Japanese may also have gathered limonite or iron sands from their own riverbeds. Local production occurred in at least two places in Kyushu: in Ōita Prefecture to the east and in Miyazaki Prefecture to the south, where primitive bloom furnaces appear to have been capable of refining about ten kilograms of iron at a time.[47]

By Late Yayoi, and as far north as the Kantō, iron was used for such tools as plows, hoes, and sickles for farmers; axes, adzes, chisels, planes, scrapers, and gravers for carpenters; spearheads and fishhooks for fishermen; and arrowheads, spearheads, swords, and halberds for fighters. But only about fifteen pieces of iron have been discovered in Late Yayoi sites of the Kantō itself, where in the deepening conservatism of the north, cultural development was slow. And in the Tōhoku, only one piece has been found, a fishhook, in a shell mound on Matsushima Bay in Miyagi Prefecture.

Wooden tools and utensils were especially useful in the marshy fields of Yayoi times. The wood of cryptomeria (Japanese cedar) and oak was usually selected, but wooden objects in the Karako site of Nara Prefecture were made of cherry, mulberry, and zelkova. Apart from farming tools, which were later tipped with iron, pieces of looms, drills used in making fire, cups and bowls turned on a simple lathe, small pieces of furniture (such as weavers' stools), trimly carved and painted shields, wooden human effigies, and birds have been dug up. The body of a *koto*, an ancient stringed instrument, was unearthed at Kasuga City, Fukuoka Prefecture. *Geta*, large clogs used when transplanting young rice plants, were discovered at Toro but, surprisingly, no plow, although plows had appeared at earlier sites. One would expect that at least fragments of their wooden frames would have been preserved.

Craftsmanship was best in the Kinki. Pottery was sometimes painted; wooden cups, bowls and utensils were meticulously carved; and bronze bells superbly cast. A popular pattern in all Kinki arts was the *ryūsui* (flowing water), a series of parallel horizontal lines sweeping back and forth, combed on pottery and drawn in wide relief on wooden vessels and in thread relief on bells, evoking the impression of water. Imaginative writers have had a field day with the bells, some-

47 Ibid., p. 61.

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times identifying this motif with sympathetic magic meant to ensure adequate water for rice farming.

Yayoi pottery found north of Toro in Shizuoka Prefecture includes pieces with highly refined cord marking and red painted surfaces. That of north Honshū is almost as rich as northern Jōmon pottery is in its shape and variety of decoration, and it includes zoned cord marking that can easily be confused with the Late Jōmon style.

The traditional line of demarcation between north and south crosses south Tōkai. Rightly or wrongly, much is made of the different forest patterns on the opposite sides of the Ōi River: laurel to the west and cryptomeria to the east. Middle Yayoi sites along or near this line show a substantial increase in evergreen leaf trees and pine, which always do well in unenriched soil after deforestation, usually attributable to farming. On this line lies the Toro site of Shizuoka, where cord marking is first encountered on Yayoi pottery.

Developed Yayoi communities

Toro is the most intensively analyzed of the mature, relatively self-sufficient Yayoi agricultural communities.[48] The village, located along the Abe River, prospered until a catastrophic flood wiped it out, leaving the wooden debris of houses lined up in the direction of the flood's flow. No iron objects and almost no personal possessions of any worth have been found there, either because the villagers had ample warning or because they returned to recover their valuables. But iron tools had been used to shape the thousands of cryptomeria slats placed along the edges of the rice paddies and beside the paths.

Toro had a highly developed rice cultivation system for over fifty paddies occupying seventy thousand square meters (or about seventeen acres) with sluice-gated irrigation ditches and wells available when needed. The rice yield was too large for customary storage methods, and there was almost no pottery. Toro and a few other communities of that time and region constructed storehouses that were raised, windowless structures standing one to two meters above the ground and supported by six or more posts. Built with planks of regular shape and with floors, doors, and a structural style making it possible to include windows, these storehouses embodied the major architectural advances of the time, and their status value as resi-

48 Ōba Iwao, *Toro iseki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ashikabi shobō, 1948); Nihon kōkogakkai, *Toro* (Tokyo: Mainichi shimbunsha, 1949); Komai Kazuchika, *Toro no iseki* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1955).

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dences was soon recognized. Individuals who could afford to build them lowered the floors for convenience but then had to suffer the discomfort of hearthless interiors during colder weather. Tribal leaders and/or shamans made them into palaces (*miya*), taking one step toward the earliest Shinto shrines (*gū*). Their architecture and names were apparently interchangeable, reflecting the dual role of secular–religious leaders.

Yayoi dwellings were sometimes erected over shallow pits – dug on higher ground to avoid wet floors – which were usually oval in shape (averaging six by eight meters) with four heavy posts set on sunken wooden plates for support in the soft soil. Many houses seem not to have had fireplaces, perhaps because of dampness. The style appears to have originated in south Japan during a period that was in any case warm. Houses in the southwest were usually square. Beams and slanted poles were covered with thatch and crowned by an *irimoya* roof with a flared section that served as a ventilator and sunshade. The interior was banked with earth at the foot of the wall, forming a surrounding bench supported by wooden slats and a dike for the outside ditch.

The community was almost fully collectivized. At Toro, numerous wooden tools were clustered on the floor of one house, suggesting public rather than private ownership. One storehouse served about five houses. Some Toro houses were so close together – no more than a meter apart – that grain had to be dried in a common area. A multiplying population certainly created a variety of social and political problems, arising especially from competition for suitable land and the control of water sources. Communities were subdivided into branches that settled in highlands where wells were dug. Some added considerable dry-land farming to rice growing. Millet, soybeans, red and broad beans, and peas were raised. Traces of barley and wheat, neither of which were native plants, have also been found. Peaches were introduced and became a major fruit. Silverberry seeds, musk melon, and wild grapes were available, and akebia vines were used for basketry.

The Chinese descriptions of Japan mention wars, and archaeological findings support the veracity of those descriptions. There was a stage of intense production of stone weapons, and the building of defensive villages, especially from the eastern Inland Sea to the Kinki. Hunting tools and then actual weapons were used in fighting. One person at Doigahama had apparently been killed by a stone arrowhead that had struck his skull, and a woman at Nejiko in Nagasaki Prefecture has a bronze arrowhead in hers. Several skeletons at Yoshinogari are com-

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pletely headless. Villages were located over a hundred meters in altitude, higher than necessary for peaceful agricultural existence. This appeared to be a time of tightening tribal ties when friends were differentiated from enemies, a critical stage in the formation of power centers, especially in the Kinki.

One lightly fortified village, with a ditch around it, was located at Santonodai on the bluffs of Yokohama Bay, on a low plateau measuring approximately 110 meters from north to south and 80 meters from east to west.[49] Scores of houses were built and rebuilt there from the Middle Yayoi to the Yamato period, with numerous overlapping pits. The community must at times have been quite crowded. Rice was raised on the lowland near springs on the east side of the hill where water could easily be obtained and managed. Satellite villages were scattered about. Eight houses, loosely distributed over the plateau, apparently burned in one tragic day of destruction – by accident or hostile attack – leaving in their wake the exact size and format of a Middle Yayoi village. Seven house pits measured six to seven meters in diameter, but one was over ten meters across and contained large pots. The Late Yayoi houses here had storage pits inside them, and two large deep shafts had been dug at the edge of the site where villagers may have collectively stored their rice.

Local bronze production

Bronze and iron came to have the same patterns of use as on the continent: bronze as upper-class symbols of status and weapons of war, and iron as lower-class tools for manual labor and farming. Bronze casting required highly trained artisans and the supervision of a few production centers in order to ensure quality and controlled distribution. But iron could be made in "backyard furnaces" with only a little instruction. Consequently, bronze had greater ritual significance in the Yayoi period than at any other time in Japanese history.

A second- or third-century B.C. "winged" arrowhead, discovered in late 1979 at Imakawa in Fukushima, is probably the oldest bronze object found in Japan. Other Yayoi bronze categories were heirlooms, religious equipment, weapons, and decorative items that included Chinese mirrors, northeast Asian mirrors with geometric thread-relief patterns, dagger-swords, spearheads, halberds, sword ornaments, shield whorl ornaments, bracelets, coins, vessels, and horse bells. *Huo-chuan*

49 Itō Nobuo, "Sumai," in *Nihon no bijutsu* 38 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1969), pp. 22–23.

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(J: *kasen*) coins, bronze mirrors, vessels, and sword ornaments were not copied by the Japanese at the time, but daggers, socketed and tanged spearheads, halberds, and small horse bells were at first reproduced and then greatly enlarged as major religious symbols.

Yayoi bronze finds are concentrated in two geographical zones: weapons in north Kyushu and as far east as the middle Inland Sea; and bells in the eastern Inland Sea, the Kinki, and as far east as the southern Tōkai. The overlap in the Inland Sea is the first archaeological indication that this was the critical arena of conflict between Tsukushi tribes of the south and Kinki tribes of the east. The strategic Kibi region in between controlled the traffic of vital materials destined for the Kinki, making it necessary for any Kinki tribal leader interested in consolidating his position and expanding power to subjugate the Kibi, mollify its leaders, or resort to the use of diplomacy. An early emperor tried to control the Kibi area through intermarriage.

The earliest bronze swords and spearheads had probably been introduced by the first century B.C. and locally reproduced within the next hundred years, in all likelihood just in north Kyushu. Sandstone molds for weapons and bracelets have been found at several sites. One of the molds is a foreign one, probably brought in as a model. Immigrants were directly involved at first, as the technical level is not inferior to that of Korea. In time, local castings became progressively longer, wider, and thinner. Japanese-made weapons were rarely interred with the dead. But special deposits of several bronzes laid together horizontally have been found, sometimes in graded sizes and presumably buried at selected spots to ensure the fertility of crops and the protection of territory. If placating spirits of earth and harvest was intended, as is sometimes thought, these bronzes may have been periodically unearthed and reburied.

Bronze bells (*dōtaku*) represent very different technological problems and solutions to them. Small bells (*bataku*, or horse bells), not usually more than ten centimeters long, were first discovered in 1960 (three in Kasuga City sites in Fukuoka and one in a site in Usa City, Ōita) and were thought to have come from Korea.[50]

Conventional views were based on the assumption that no bronze bells were cast in Kyushu, but this has been disproved by recent discoveries. Stone and clay fragments of molds for small bells – previously

50 Takakura Hiroaki, "Kyūshu no dōtaku," in Kagawa Mitsuo, ed., *Usa: tairiku bunka no Nihon kodai-shi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1978), pp. 201–12.

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found in the prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo – have recently been found in the Kyushu prefectures of Fukuoka and Saga. From the debris of a workshop site at Yasunagata in Tosu City, Saga Prefecture, came a fragment of a sandstone bell mold that had become discolored by use, two molds for bronze spearheads, and some copper slag and a small quantity of refined tin. The bell mold was for a Middle Yayoi bell about twenty centimeters high, of a type usually recovered from sites in prefectures along the eastern shores of the Inland Sea.

The earliest bells taken from Inland Sea sites are small (between twenty and twenty five centimeters high) and poorly made. Surface flaws resulting from unescaped gases were patched and smoothed. A small number, found only in Hiroshima and Okayama, bear elliptical, straight, and curved relief lines drawn in crude attempts to represent faces. Others from Hyōgo and Shimane are also very mediocre productions. It was not until about the second century A.D. that casters solved technical problems. The wall panels and flanges of these bells have pictorial or geometric patterns in sharp, linear relief. In the third century, bells became increasingly thin walled, tall, and slender. The thread-relief pictures were discontinued, and the decoration became more crisp and stereotyped, probably reflecting a slackening intensity of interest in ritual.

About 10 percent of the over four hundred known bronze bells bear small thread-relief pictures that, ranging from early randomly dispersed ones to later well-organized ones on panels, are remarkably graphic representations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, ecstatic shamans, storehouses, couples pounding rice, fishing, and hunting with a long bow and trained dogs. In sum they illustrate hunting, collecting, preparing and storing activities, perhaps as seasonal symbols used in ceremonies associated with planting and harvesting.

The discovery of identical bells has led to the assumption that most foundries existed in the Osaka–Nara area. The evidence for this is seen in bells that are clearly products of the same mold. For example, eight bells from widely scattered Kinki sites are thought to have been cast in the same mold. From five other sets of two or more bells from a single mold, at least one bell of each set was found in the Kinki. The recent discovery of a mold in Ibaraki City in Osaka Prefecture reinforces the view that foundries existed mainly in that area.

A few fragments of other molds have turned up by accident, but the Ibaraki one has a complete sandstone matrix for a Middle Yayoi style of bell 34 centimeters high. It was found with chunks of other bell

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molds and with molds for casting curved beads (*magatama*), glass *magatama*, and mouthpieces for bellows. A possible sandstone source is about 30 kilometers away. Bells produced at Ibaraki have been found up to 150 kilometers distant, one in the prefecture of Kagawa on the island of Shikoku.[51] Manufacture and distribution in the Kinki leads to further speculation that the increasing size and quantity of the bells were directly connected with the rising power of a dominant tribal group and that their distribution indicates the extent of the group's influence over other tribes.

Bells are usually found isolated on terraces or hillsides above fertile fields. Like weapons, they probably were ritually buried, doubtless with elaborate ceremony in order to ensure a good harvest. They have also been uncovered in caches of seven or eight or even more. The most impressive collection contains fourteen bells of different sizes and seven halberds – all found by chance in 1965 on a forested ridge at Sakuragaoka-chō above the city of Kobe. Two of the bells bear panels of relief figures. One is so unusual that it was quickly designated as a National Treasure.

Any question about the source of bronze ingredients brings up the *Shoku Nihongi's* reference to the discovery of copper in the Chichibu region of Musashi Province (now Saitama Prefecture), an event sufficiently important to warrant great celebration, and the adoption of Wadō (Japanese copper, or refined copper) for the name of the era that began in 708 and ended in 711. But if it is true that no copper was found locally before the early years of the eighth century, enormous logistics problems would have existed.

The recovery of hundreds of Yayoi bronze weapons and bells – and especially bronze mirrors, horse trappings, and other objects from later ancient tombs – indicates a massive circulation of bronze, of which only a small part is known today. Many of the bronzes thus accumulated were used for casting the late-sixth-century Buddhist statues, causing a great strain on the supply of metal, especially in the closing years of the seventh century when large temples were having monumental sixteen-foot bronze images made. Because this was after Japan was driven out of Korea in 663 and was forced to trade directly with China, most of the material may have been transported directly from China. All this suggests that long before Buddhist statues were cast, efficient barter and trade relationships had been established for stockpiling foreign bronze.

51 Tsuboi, *Jōmon bunka ron*, p. 161.

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There seem to have been many sources for both raw and recycled material: the use of Chinese or Korean ore, or both; the importation of Chinese and/or Korean artifacts for melting down and recasting; a combination of raw and recycled material; and the exclusive use of Japanese ore. But the findings of research tend to rule out the last-mentioned source, leading scholars to accept the *Shoku Nihongi's* date for the discovery of copper. The current tendency is to favor the view that most of the material was obtained by acquiring Korean and Chinese bronzes and melting them down for recasting in desired forms. Because there was little change in the metal mixture once percentages for acceptable quality were determined, probably no more than one source of materials was exploited. No matter how the material was procured, an appropriate political setting had to exist or to be created.

The isotopic ratios of lead in fifty-three Japan-made bells, mirrors, arrowheads, and horse trappings of Yayoi and Burial Mound period artifacts have been compared with those of Chinese and Korean galenas (lead sulphide) in Former Han mirrors from north China, in Later Han and post-Han mirrors from central and south China, and in one so-called fine-line and off-center knob mirror from Korea.[52] The tested bells were of all types and from different periods, ranging from early to late. They have a relatively uniform composition of 90 percent copper, 4 percent tin, 4 percent lead, and traces of other elements. Comparisons showed that the two oldest bells were recasts of Korean bronze artifacts, that thirty-three bells were of Chinese bronze dating from the Former Han and that eighteen were bronze dating from the Later Han.

Bronzes produced in Japan after 714 have only trace levels of lead, or 5 or more percent that was intentionally added. The twelve Japanese coins issued between 708 and 758 contain added lead, but the bronze epitaph of Ō no Yasumaro, compiler of the *Kojiki* who died in 723 and whose grave was accidentally discovered in 1979, has less than 1 percent – typical of bronzes made in Japan during and after the eighth century.

These discoveries have led to the conjecture that lead ingots were imported from China in order to supplement the lead recovered from recycling continental bronzes. Thus the volume of imported bronze materials was probably much larger than previously imagined.

52 Mabuchi Hisao, "Seidōki genryō wa umi o wattatekita," *Kagaku asahi* 12 (1985): 23–27; Yamazaki Kazuo, "Dōkyō, dōtaku nado seidōki no kagaku seibun," *Kōkogaku no shizen kagaku* 15 (1982): 13–21; Mabuchi Hisao and Hirao Yoshimitsu, "Namari dōi taihi kara mita dōtaku no genryō," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 68 (1982): 42–62, 168.

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Further evidence that many imported bronzes were melted down can be obtained from studying the loss of tin content when imports were recast in Japan. An analysis of three Chinese mirrors and one Japanese copy shows that the Chinese mirrors are 20 percent tin but that the Japanese copy is 13 percent. Six Japanese bells of different periods proved to have a tin content of 12 percent or less, and tests on a spearhead showed that it had very little.

Shamans and chieftains

To understand Japan at this time, we must consider Chinese descriptions of the people of Wo (Wa), despite the long and heated debate over the original location of Yamatai that drew attention to errors of direction and distance. The Chinese authors of the *Wei chih* dated A.D. 297 described Hsieh-ma-t'ai – which the Japanese have usually called Yamatai – as the strongest of many "states," "kingdoms," or "countries."[53] In earlier accounts Wo was described as having around one hundred countries, some thirty of which were known to be in direct contact with China. The Chinese inability to gauge distances on water, measured by travel days, produced a puzzle of overwhelming proportions. A host of theories concerning the location of Yamatai – first appearing in the Kamakura period – has clouded the information. Perhaps the confusion was not entirely unintended, as many of the descriptions are far from flattering, beginning with the one that accepts Wo (dwarfs) as the name of Japan.

The accounts provide valuable glimpses into the religious practices as well as the political and economic life of early Japan, and they supply strong testimony of social differentiation in the Late Yayoi period. Yamatai was victorious after years of warfare, and it was ruled by Himiko (or Pimiko), a female shaman of extraordinary power who was served by one thousand women and one man and guarded by one hundred men but was accessible only to her brother. Chinese histories state that she lived between A.D. 183 and 248.

These Chinese accounts report that in Japan the government collects "taxes"; marketplaces are centers of trade in each district; upper-class people are attended by others, a man of lower rank gets off the

53 For a translation, see Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (South Pasadena: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), pp. 1–21. The most useful Japanese volume, a history of the study and encyclopedia of the topic, is by Yasumoto Biten, *Yamatai koku handobukku* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1987), which capsulizes the theories of 157 writers and lists 363 separate studies in the bibliography.

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road and kneels to show his respect when meeting a man of higher rank; and men of status have four or five wives. They also state that the Japanese have several titles, for which there are no clear Chinese or Korean equivalents,[54] leading some scholars to accept this as impressive evidence for the uniqueness of the Japanese language at that time. Also, professional abstainers were said to have been employed. Unwashed and unshaved, they did such things as accompany ocean travelers in order to ensure the safety of their passage. If misfortune occurred, they were killed because of the belief that they had broken their vows. The Chinese accounts also report that the Wo ate with their hands and drank heavily. Divination was practiced by burning bones, mourning lasted for ten days, and burial was in a single coffin. The accounts say that political chaos followed Himiko's death and that an ineffectual male ruler had to be replaced by a thirteen-year old girl to keep the peace. Himiko was reportedly buried in a large mounded tomb, about one hundred meters in diameter, at which time one thousand male and female attendants were immolated.

As elsewhere, Chinese compilers of dynastic histories showed a fondness for large round numbers. Great distances were given in hundreds and thousands of *li* (a *li* was probably about one-sixth of a mile). To reach Yamatai, travelers leaving Tai-fang – the present Inchon on the west coast of Korea – sailed south and then across the strait by way of the islands of Tsushima and Iki to Matsuura, Ito, Na, and Fumi. These first "countries" of Japan were long ago identified as places in north Kyushu, but from there the trip to Yamatai required another ten days by sea and thirty by land. This revealing statement, plus the fact that land could be sighted during the island-hopping trip from Korea (and Kyushu was not that far away), would seem to make it unnecessary to give such an elaborate description of a place so close as Kyushu. In any event, despite all the arguments to the contrary, the description eliminates north Kyushu as the center of Wo. Hsieh-ma-t'ai (Yamatai) was probably a Chinese phonetic word for Yamato of central Japan.

The long and largely fruitless exercise of trying to locate Yamatai was inspired by the need to disassociate Himiko from the imperial line after it was realized that she could not be identified with "Empress" Jingū. Tokugawa historians wanted an unbroken, male genealogy that was more strictly defined than that delineated in the *Nihon shoki,*

54 Ranging between two to four and graded. Each "country" has its own titles; Yamatai alone having four, a fact in itself that indicates a larger population and a more complex administrative system.

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whose compilers were attempting to maximize the antiquity and authority of the Yamato line.

The existence of customs mentioned in Chinese accounts, such as scapulimancy, have been verified archaeologically by the discovery in several widely scattered Yayoi sites of bones bearing burnt pits. Wooden coffins were simple in Japan, whereas wealthy Chinese were buried in a box within a box. The Chinese claim that Japanese ate with their fingers was probably correct, as is suggested by the lack of chopsticks among the mass of wooden objects taken from Yayoi sites. The Japanese are also said to have grown plants and trees and to have made silk, linen, cotton, and hemp. Parts of wooden looms show that they wove cloth twenty to thirty centimeters wide, and fragments of such cloth have been recovered from wrapped human bones and bronze mirrors. Impressions on the bottoms of pots from several sites seem to be those of wild ramie fiber. The S-twisted warp weave had a warp of six to ten threads and a woof of eleven to twenty-four threads.

Social stratification is frequently alluded to in the Chinese records, as implied in the efforts of tribal leaders to secure territory and in the consequent collective and personal needs for maintaining power. The manufacture and use of bronze, and to a lesser extent the control of textile distribution, must have contributed to social stratification. Archaeological evidence provides strong support for this generalization, despite arguments that burial variations within a single cemetery reveal distinctions between foreigners and natives (which may still be social differentiation) or represent temporal change.

The Tanō site in Osaka demonstrates social grading. Amid vast debris of mostly Middle Yayoi pottery have been found pits of both small and large houses, the larger being associated with wooden coffins and the smaller ones with burial jars.[55] Most of the skeletons are of adult males lying in an extended position on their backs. Coffins located near large houses contained grave goods such as beads, bronze bracelets, and nonlocal jasper; one coffin was painted on the interior. Other burials contained nothing.

Considerable archaeological evidence points to trade – apart from that involving bronze weapons and bells – all over the country.[56] Some of the evidence is indirect but suggests trade in rice, cloth, iron, stone tools, wooden objects, salt, and other commodities and raw materials: rice in north Tōhoku sites where it is unlikely that rice was grown;

55 Murakawa Yukihiro, *Tanō* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1967), pp. 155–80.
56 Peter Bleed, "The Yayoi Cultures of Japan," *Arctic Anthropology* 9, no. 2 (1972): 16–17, 20.

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iron tools in sites where the local geology made iron production unlikely; and pots at places that produced more salt than the local people could use. The dispersal of more communities far from the coast where the Jōmon people had lived increased the demand for salt, and salt-producing sites have been identified.[57] North Kyushu has provided particularly strong evidence of trade in stone tools. From Early and Middle Yayoi onward, numerous rice reapers (women's knives) made at the Tateiwa site in Iizuka City (Fukuoka Prefecture) have been found in more than a dozen sites within a fifty-kilometer radius, whereas Tateiwa itself yielded twenty-six reapers, some unfinished. Polished stone axes made at Imayama in Nishi-ku of Fukuoka City are also widely distributed, many at a single site. Tateiwa and Imayama are about forty kilometers apart: Tateiwa is thirty kilometers up the Ongagawa River, and Imayama is at Imajuku on the coast. Many polished stone tools at Tenjinzawa in Fukushima Prefecture suggest that this was a production and distribution center. In the vicinity of the Uryūdō site of Higashi Osaka City (Osaka Prefecture), finished wooden tools have been found at sites on the plain and many roughed-out tools at the borders of forests, as though the latter was where people supplied the blocks and/or finished products for piedmont residents.[58] A male skeleton interred in a jar at Tateiwa had fourteen shell bracelets on his right arm, all made from semitropical and tropical shells, *Strombus latissimus* Linné, of the south Pacific area, the closest source of which is the Ryūkyū Islands.

It has been concluded that the fundamental Altaic characteristics of the Japanese language were already established by Yayoi times, having been brought by immigrants who passed through a sparsely occupied Korean peninsula during the neolithic period, well before the northern part of the peninsula was blocked off by Han expansion. Some secondary Malayo-Polynesian linguistic features had entered Japan from a southern coastal area. But the number of arrivals in Early Yayoi was apparently not enough to overwhelm the existing language, although there doubtless were modifications. If the fundamental characteristics of the Japanese language were Yayoi or more recent, far less effort would be required to trace their origins and connections. The small upper class of Middle and Late Yayoi – if that is what it was – probably had little effect on the language. Note that northern Korea did not adopt the

57 Yoshiro Kondo, "The Salt Industry in Ancient Japan," *Salt* (Essex: University of Essex, 1975), pp. 62–63: Yayoi period salt-manufacturing sites on the coasts of Okayama, Kagawa, Tokushima, and Wakayama prefectures.

58 Yasuda, "Prehistoric Environment," p. 235.

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Chinese language despite centuries of Chinese rule. Divergences between Korean and Japanese must have been very great by the time of the fourth-century ruler Yūryaku. Indeed, interpreters were needed by Korean heads of *be* (saddlers, weavers, potters, and painters) when communicating with their craftsmen.

Evidence for the physical characteristics of the Yayoi people comes from about a thousand skeletons found in southwest Japan, mostly belonging to Early and Middle Yayoi periods when the jar-burial system (which provided the best conditions for preservation) was popular. No evidence of population displacement has been found in the physical remains of north Kyushu. Early Yayoi people in north and west Kyushu were taller by an average of two centimeters, but they were otherwise little different from their Jōmon predecessors. It is now known that the Early-to-Middle Yayoi people of northwest and south Kyushu were rather similar to the Tsugumo people of the Late Jōmon.[59] Not until the end of Yayoi was the impact of better nutrition and new genetic types felt. By that time, differences between Yayoi and Jōmon people had become clear. Their faces were then markedly flatter, beginning a slow trend toward mongoloid features that continued until the sixteenth century. The stature for males had increased to about 162 centimeters in the Early Yayoi but declined noticeably during the Middle Yayoi. Longevity, it is estimated, was by then one year longer. Like the Jōmon people, the Yayoi people were not homogeneous, but they were looking more alike by the end of the Yayoi period. On the whole, the weapons-burying people of the southwest tended to have long skulls, and those of the bell-burying people of the east were rounder.[60] Some nine thousand footprints of feet 23 to 25 centimeters long were found 3.5 meters below the surface of the Middle Yayoi Uryūdō site in Higashi Osaka City. The feet were 25 to 27 centimeters long at Itazuke. Even today the Kawachi people of central Japan are regarded as smaller than those of Kyushu. Nutrition had a greater effect on physical change than did new racial strains, although the latter must have been quite important. Indeed, the dramatic change in the size and height of the younger generation in Japan after World War II is likewise attributed to the availability of larger

59 Naito Yoshiatsu, "Seihoku Kyūshū shutsudo no Yayoi jidai jinkotsu," *Jinruigaku zasshi* 79 (1971): 246.

60 Kanaseki Takeo, "Yayoi jidaijin," in Wajima Seiichi, ed., *Yayoi jidai*, vol. 3 of *Nihon no kōkogaku* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 1966), pp. 460–71; Nagai Masafumi and Sano Hajime, "The Ancient Inhabitants of Southwestern Japan," *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, pp. 174–5.

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amounts and greater varieties of more nutritious foods, not to foreign racial infusion. To a degree, the same can be said of the Yayoi people.

Koyama counted 10,624 Yayoi sites and calculated a total population of 601,500, almost 3.7 times that of the Latest Jōmon period. Continuous and long occupation of a site, as shown by evolving pottery types, indicates that the area was climatically stable and agriculturally advantageous. Intermittent and short occupancy was probably due to sudden or protracted weather changes that were extreme enough to force the inhabitants to leave. In some cases they seem to have returned, in others not. At the north Kyushu sites, occupation was relatively short, but the Kinki sites were occupied continuously for the longest periods of time, indicating that the environment there offered the greatest benefits and safety.[61] It was thus in the Osaka–Nara area that the early rulers settled and maintained control until the capital cities of Nagaoka and Kyoto were built at the end of the eighth century. Even the later removal of capitals to other places did not destroy Nara's image of stability and continuity.

Events of Middle-to-Late Yayoi – reflected in the stories of the first emperor (Kamu-yamato-ihare-biko no Mikoto, or Jimmu) – centered on the efforts of Yayoi chieftains to stake out claims to the best territory. According to the *Nihon shoki,* Jimmu and his followers battled their way from south Kyushu through the Inland Sea, overcame resistance in the Kibi region, and, unable to penetrate the Kinki defenses around Osaka, skirted the peninsula and entered from the lightly occupied east to settle finally in the lower Nara basin.

At every step of the way, especially at the most hopeless moments, Jimmu is said to have sought the advice of the kami and, after performing sacrifices and practicing abstinence, fought successfully. The literature makes it unmistakably clear that there was a blind reliance on shamans and that a tribal leader served as a medium between his people and the supernatural world. The Chinese accounts of shamans and wars, the Japanese description of leaders pushing east into occupied areas, and Late Yayoi archaeological evidence of the rise of a power center in the Kinki all present a convincing picture of the emergence of a strong tribal group in that area during the second and third centuries A.D.

Another region reconsidered in the light of recent archaeological finds is Izumo in western Japan. Apparently that region was occupied by a far stronger political group than archaeologists and historians

61 Kanaseki and Sahara, "The Yayoi Period," p. 24.

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have been willing to admit. According to the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki,* the region was a bastion of resistance, a major stumbling block to outside control and therefore earmarked for subjugation. Modern scholars have tended to accept the Yamato view of Izumo, seeing it as something like a wretched netherworld to which obstreperous and unreconstructed individuals were properly exiled. Indeed, Yomi no Kuni, the land of the dead vividly described at the end of the famous Izanagi–Izanami myth, was traditionally identified with a cave on the Shimane coast. The hostility of the region evoked evil connotations that were then personified in Susa no Ō no Mikoto, the brother of the Sun Goddess who justified the righteous behavior of Yamato toward the villainous Izumo.

Since 1984, when a logging road was being constructed, Izumo suddenly rose high in the estimation of people when a cache of 358 bronze swords was uncovered at the Kōjindani site, which is more than the total number found elsewhere in Japan.[62] Seven other sites in Shimane Prefecture had yielded only 16 bronze swords. The site also contained 16 bronze spears and 6 bronze bells. Kōjindani is a hillside site on the Hikawa plain, twenty-eight meters above sea level and six kilometers west of Lake Shinji. The southern plain is watered by the Hii River as it flows into Lake Shinji. The Great Izumo Shrine is fifteen kilometers away, and this area contains numerous ancient burial mounds.

All the Kōjindani swords are of the tanged type, measuring between fifty and fifty-three centimeters in length and so much alike that one suspects that they were produced locally. They were found in a hollowed-out oblong pit on the slope, aligned in four rows. A short row on the west had 34 swords, the points of which alternately faced in opposite directions. The next row of 11 swords were in a similar arrangement, with the exception of four at the south end that all pointed west. All the swords of the last two rows, one with 120 and the other with 93, pointed east. A thin layer of blackish brown organic soil lying directly over the swords appears to have been originally a cloth covering, and the postholes found there are thought to indicate a superstructure.

Susa no Ō no Mikoto's activities are first described in the mythological sequence that preceded earthly events. Because of his reprehensible behavior, he was ostracized from the Takamahara community of

62 Adachi Katsumi, "Shimane-ken Kōjindani iseki dōken hakkutsu chōsa gaihō, *Kōkogaku zasshi* 70 (1984): 1–8, 144.

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kami and forced to descend to the bank of the Hii River. He established himself there as the ruler of Izumo by slaying an eight-headed serpent, the symbol of evil. From him was descended Ōkuni Nushi, who was the chief protagonist of the Sun Goddess's descendants and had to be brought to terms before Yamato could establish control over the Eight Island Country.

Ōkuni Nushi is a kami with many local manifestations. In the Nara basin he is Ōmono Nushi; in the Tokyo area Ōkunitama no Kami. He is also known as Yachihoko no Kami, or the kami of eight thousand spears. All of the weapon-connected myths are of Yayoi origin. Ōkuni Nushi was pacified through a negotiated arrangement by which he was established in a large palace with a generous income, in exchange for his agreement to withdraw from political affairs. Thereafter, according to the *Nihon shoki,* the Izumo rulers were responsible for the conduct of religious affairs, and the Yamato rulers took care of political affairs.

Later writers continued to associate the area with distinctive local customs and gave it deferential treatment. One legacy lingered on into historical times, a penalty not required of other leaders from other regions: that when appearing at court, the governor of Izumo had to swear a special oath of allegiance. The Izumo Shrine continued, however, to be an important shrine throughout the Nara and Heian periods, a visible reminder that the region had once held a position of great influence. After 1248, the shrine was rebuilt on a much smaller scale but was again enlarged somewhat in 1667.

At first glance, the Izumo region would appear too geographically remote to constitute a threat to more centrally located political groups. But apparently this was not the case. Direct trade with Korea may have accounted for its unusual accumulation of wealth. Whatever the reason, the fears reflected by Yamato rulers were not unfounded. Izumo was a formidable political unit that successfully hoarded its resources, and the area was better protected than was the Yamato basin's low hills and open plain.

Another center was Tsukushi, the large lowland portion of north Kyushu, where most of the early myths are set. The sun spear (*hiboko*), figuring prominently in these myths, was undoubtedly a special spear used by the bronze spear–honoring, male-dominated Tsukushi clan group that had amassed great power and expanded eastward toward central Japan. According to the recorded myths, the sun spear (instrumental in creating the Eight Island Country of Japan), was a grass-wrapped weapon used in luring the Sun Goddess

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from her cave and in subduing the Izumo region. But as the bronze-spear people of Tsukushi entered the Kinki area, bronze bells and later bronze mirrors – not spears – became their major religious symbols. The matriarchal tradition of the east was taken over by the new arrivals among whom male chieftains were dominant.

Long experience with female shamans in the east had fostered the practice of venerating a female kami as the chief deity, but this early eastern tradition was altered by later chronicle compilers who were intent on sanctifying male-ruler descent. Some nine rulers before Sujin were apparently fabricated in order to enhance the male line with antiquity and seniority. Accounts of these reigns contain no verifiable historical evidence. Still, by the time the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* were compiled, the idea of the state's highest kami being a female was not considered contradictory, possibly because of the influence exerted by strong empresses.

Mimaki-iri-biko-inie no Mikoto (later called Sujin), the tenth ruler in the official chronology who died in A.D. 258 or 318, was probably the first major Yamato ruler. The *Kojiki* says that he "first ruled the land."[63] Sujin established a male-centered, quasi-religious pattern of rule that was characteristic of the end of the Yayoi period and the beginning of the Yamato period. One particular tumulus located south of the city of Tenri and identified as that of Sujin is the first imperial tomb to have a keyhole shape and other features of the late third- and early fourth-century A.D. tomb style.

In reviewing early stages of human life on the Japanese islands before the introduction of rice agriculture around 300 B.C., one first notes the claims of archaeologists that a Lower Paleolithic culture existed in northern Japan before 35,000 B.C. and as early as 180,000 years ago. But more research is needed before such claims can be accepted. Additional evidence is also required by those who are trying to push back the dissolution of land bridges to earlier millennia and by those advancing the theory that water craft were used to reach Japan in Lower Paleolithic times.

But Upper Paleolithic culture, beginning about thirty thousand years ago and lasting for about twenty thousand years, was widespread throughout most of the country and regionally different. This was succeeded by the Mesolithic (Sōsō-ki) period, in which pottery

63 Donald L. Philippi, trans., *Kojiki* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, and Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), p. 208.

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appeared and the bow and arrow were invented. The Earliest Jōmon (Sō-ki) period introduced the Jōmon way of life with the discovery of coastal seafoods and the formation of shell mounds.

The Early Jōmon period (after about 7500 B.C.) was marked by rising temperatures and a phenomenal population increase. In the Middle Jōmon period, large settlements appeared in eastern and central regions, thriving on nut crops, starchy root vegetables, and the meat of wild boar and deer. Toward the end of the Middle Jōmon, natural calamities disrupted established ways of obtaining food, forcing most inhabitants to leave the central mountains. Climatic instability was then accompanied by a rapid population decline. Some Late Jōmon sites contain a preponderance of ritual remains, suggesting that people under stress were turning to ritual and ceremony. By the end of the Jōmon period the population was reduced to almost half its maximum size and was widely scattered, the largest communities continuing to exist in the north. These developments are commonly attributed to environmental exhaustion and slow flora and fauna replenishment.

As early as the Late Jōmon (from about 1000 to 300 B.C.), rice was being cultivated in northern Kyushu and, before the period came to a close, in areas as far north as the Tōhoku. The spread of wet-rice agriculture early in the Yayoi period (around 300 B.C.) was linked, by the second century B.C., with the introduction and use of iron and bronze. After that, small Jōmon communities in northern Kyushu were absorbed or displaced by Yayoi immigrants from south Korea and east China who were physically larger than the Jōmon people (who are now thought to be closely related to the Ainu). Yayoi immigrants built moated villages with watchtowers, imported bronze weapons and mirrors, as well as iron weapons and tools, and formed tribal alliances with mechanisms of control described as small kingdoms. Both Chinese accounts and archaeological finds indicate that these kingdoms fought among themselves over land and access to water and metallic ore.

Eventually some of their shaman leaders, utilizing both military and ceremonial power, established federated kingdoms in northern Kyushu, along the Inland Sea, and as far east as the Kinai and Izumo. Those in western Japan were strongly influenced by continental cultures and made much ritual use of bronze weapons and mirrors, whereas those farther east – less influenced by the original Yayoi immigrants – favored the ritual use of bronze bells. Large Yayoi communities also emerged in the Kantō employing little bronze or iron,

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yet organized their social life around the cultivation of rice. The strongest federation, located in the Nara basin of central Japan, subsequently developed into the Yamato state, whose leaders figured prominently in the history of Japan and buried their predecessors in huge mounds (*kofun*.)

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CHAPTER 2

THE YAMATO KINGDOM

The Yamato kingdom appeared on the Nara plain of central Japan between about A.D. 250 and 300 and, during the next three centuries, passed through successive stages of vigor, expansion, and disruption. Because its "great kings" (*ōkimi*)[1] were buried in large mounds, these years are commonly designated the Burial Mound (*kofun*)[2] period. That was when farmers converted vast tracts of virgin land into rice fields; immigrants from northeast Asia introduced advanced techniques of production from the continent; soldiers rode horses and fought with iron weapons; armies subjugated most of Japan and extended their control to neighboring regions on the Korean peninsula; and kings dispatched diplomatic missions to distant courts of Korea and China. But because no written Japanese records of that day have been preserved, and Korean and Chinese accounts do not tell us much about contemporary life on the Japanese islands, the Yamato period has long been considered a dark and puzzling stretch of prehistory.

Until the close of World War II, Japanese historians tended to think of this period as a time when the "unbroken" imperial line was mysteriously and wondrously formed. But postwar scholars have discovered new written evidence, seen historical significance in massive archaeological finds, and viewed the whole of ancient Japanese life from different angles. Egami Namio, for example, used Korean sources and the findings of archaeologists to develop the thesis that in this period

1 The Yamato rulers were called "great kings," a literal translation of the word *ōkimi* found in two fifth-century inscriptions, on a sword found in the Eda Funa-yama burial mound in Kumamoto Prefecture and on a sword excavated from the Inari-yama burial mound in Saitama Prefecture. Although we have no proof that the word was used during earlier years of the Yamato period, the construction of huge mounds in the southeastern corner of Yamato after the middle of the third century suggests the appearance of rulers who may well have been called something like *ōkimi*. Not until the Taihō code of 701 do we have evidence that a Japanese ruler was called an emperor or empress (*tennō*). See Kamada Motokazu, "Ōken to be min sei," in *Genshi kodai*, vol. 1 of Rekishigaku kenkyū kai and Nihonshi kenkyū kai, eds., *Kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1984), pp. 233–4.

2 The word *kofun* (ancient mounds) is commonly applied only to the huge burial mounds built in Yamato after the middle of the third century. Archaeologists have, however, found earlier mounds to which they refer as *funkyū-bo* (knoll mounds).

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Japan came to be ruled by horse-riding warriors who had invaded the islands from north Asia,[3] and Ishimoda Shō reexamined ancient sources and found a heroic age.[4] But our knowledge of what was really occurring between the rule in the third century of Queen Himiko (reported in the *Wei chih*) and the reign from 592 to 628 of Empress Suiko (who reestablished relations with China) continued to be quite hazy and imprecise.

Much new research has been done in the last two or three decades, permitting us to see at long last the general outlines of a process by which clan control in the third century was replaced by a sinicized, bureaucratic state in the seventh century. Probably no other period in Japanese history has been subjected to so much illumination in such a short time. The new light has come from a number of directions. First, numerous historians – freed from prewar restraints against the critical study of Japan's sacred origins – have analyzed eighth-century chronicles, attempting to distinguish myth from history and to assess interactions between the two.[5] Other historians have looked closely at diverse sources and seen the rise and expansion of Yamato from a broad East Asian perspective.[6] Religious historians, mythologists,

3 Egami Namio, in his *Kiba minzoku kokka* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1967), used archaeological, mythological, and historical data on early non-Japanese peoples of northeast Asia to support his conclusion that Sujin was a Korean king who invaded Japan with horse-riding soldiers during the first half of the fourth century and that the Yamato state was founded in the last half of the fourth century when the Kyushu center of power was moved to central Japan. His basic thesis has been further developed, with an extensive use of Korean sources, by Gari Ledyard in "Galloping Along with the Horse-Riders: Looking for the Founders of Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1 (1975): 217–54. Recent archaeological investigations of ancient mounds located in southeastern section of the Nara plain suggest that Yamato came into existence long before the final years of the fourth century, but they provide no convincing evidence that this kingdom was created by foreign invaders. This and other weaknesses of the Egami thesis were revealed in Walter Edwards, "Event and Process in the Founding of Japan: The Horserider Theory in Archaeological Perspective," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 9 (Summer 1983): 265–95; and in Edward Kidder, Jr., "The Archaeology of the Early Horse-Riders in Japan," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 20, 3rd series (1985): 89–123. Egami nevertheless sharpened interest in continental cultural influence on Japanese life during the Yamato period.

4 In his *Nihon no kodai kokka* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1971), Ishimoda Shō concluded that Japan's heroic age came between the third and fifth centuries. Ishimoda made important contributions that have been clouded by disputes over the definition of terms and periods and overshadowed by massive amounts of new archaeological data.

5 Ueda Masaaki provides an excellent summary in his *Ōkimi no seiki*, vol. 2 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1975). Important studies can be found in *Kodai*, vols. 2–4 of Asao Naohiro, Ishi Susumu, Inoue Mitsusada, Ōishi Kaichiro, et al., eds., *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975–76). Cornelius J. Kiley carefully analyzed kinship and state development in his "State and Dynasty in Arcahic Yamato," *Journal of Asian Studies* 33 (November 1973): 25–49.

6 A pioneer work is Kitō Kiyoaki's *Nihon kodai kokka no keisei to higashi Ajia* (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1976). Suzuki Yasutami has outlined recent studies of early Japanese history from an East Asian perspective, in his "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei to Yamato ōken," *Genshi-kodai*, vol. 1 of *Kōza: Nihon-rekishi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1984), pp. 193–232.

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and folklorists have also helped us understand that even agricultural production and military expansion were then intertwined with the worship of kami (deities). See Chapter 6. But by far the greatest contributions have been made by archaeologists who have meticulously investigated thousands of burial and village sites all over Japan and compared their findings with the results of excavations made in Korea and China.[7] Other scholars have reexamined these new data and detected, in their search for meaning and wholeness, distinct patterns of social and cultural change.[8]

Utilizing the results of such research, we can now identify three major currents of change in the Yamato period. The first, lasting for around 150 years, took place when the Yamato kingdom flourished. The second, with its high tide appearing in the fifth century, came when the expanding power of the Yamato kings was manifested in overseas military campaigns, in the construction of impressive mounds containing iron weapons and horse gear, and in the development of extensive irrigation systems. The third current, coming in the turbulent sixth century, arrived when Yamato's kings, faced with setbacks at home and threatening situations abroad, became preoccupied with such imported administrative techniques as reading and writing, bookkeeping and the registration of householders, and higher forms of Chinese learning.

YAMATO VIGOR

Although the Yamato kingdom seems to have had no official relations with Chinese or Korean courts during its first century and a half of vigorous growth, evidence from archaeological sites reveals deep and wide-ranging continental influence.

The situation in northeast Asia

After the breakup of the later Han empire in A.D. 220, a number of short-lived kingdoms arose in different regions of China. Two were in contact with queens who ruled petty states in western Japan before the rise of Yamato in central Japan: the kingdom of Wei (221 to 265) that exchanged missions with the famous Himiko, and the Western Chin (265 to 317) that was in contact with Himiko's female successor. But

7 Major studies of the last decade are listed in the archaeology sections of *An Introductory Bibliography for Japanese Studies* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1974–84), vols. 1–4, pt. 2.

8 An especially valuable recent study is Shiraishi Taiichirō's "Nihon kofun bunka ron," in *Genshi-kodai*, vol. 1, pp. 159–232.

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the collapse of Western Chin at about the time Yamato came into existence was hastened by invasions of nomadic tribes from the north, a disruption that was followed by the rise and fall of one kingdom after another and that continued until the close of the sixth century. For the last two or more centuries of the Yamato period, no Chinese ruler was in a position to exchange diplomatic missions with kings as far away as Japan.

And yet Chinese cultural achievements continued to affect Japanese life in fundamental ways. Political dislocation within China may have accelerated the outward flow of Chinese techniques and knowledge. The incursion of nomadic tribes from the north seems to have forced many cultured Chinese with ties to defeated regimes to seek refuge in Korea and possibly Japan. Moreover, the destruction of Chinese colonies in Korea at the beginning of the fourth century was clearly followed by an exodus of Chinese to the islands of Japan. Although the channels of cultural flow from China in those early years cannot be accurately charted, it is becoming increasingly clear that most continental advances were introduced through Korea. Still, the imports were definitely Chinese in origin and character. It is thus generally agreed that in these first years of the Yamato period, as well as in earlier and later times, Japan lay within the Chinese cultural orbit.

In 313, just four years before the collapse of the Chinese court of the Western Chin, the old Chinese Lo-lang colony in north Korea was destroyed by Koguryŏ, the first of the three independent Korean kingdoms to emerge during the fourth century. Shortly after that, Paekche became prominent in the southwest, having amassed enough military power by 371 to invade Koguryŏ, enter the enemy capital, and kill its king. But Koguryŏ survived and became stronger. After being subjected to this humiliating defeat, Koguryŏ introduced forms of Chinese learning and control (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Chinese penal and administrative law) similar to those that, about two hundred years later, transformed the upper layers of Japanese society. Then during the last half of the fourth century, a third Korean kingdom appeared. This was Silla, the closest of the three to Yamato, on the southeast part of the peninsula.

Very little is known about political or military relations between these Korean kingdoms and Yamato during the first half of the fourth century, but in 414 a stone monument was erected in north Korea, on which was inscribed an eighteen-hundred-character memorial to King Kwanggaet'o of Koguryŏ who had died the previous year. The inscription's middle section, in which the king's exploits are detailed, con-

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tains praise of his 399 victory against Japanese invaders. Although there is considerable disagreement about what was actually written and meant there – some scholars even claim that Wo (Japanese: Wa) did not refer to people residing on the Japanese islands – the reference suggests that Yamato had gained enough strength by the end of the fourth century to dispatch armies across the Tsushima Straits to Korea.[9] Overseas military activity of this type is corroborated somewhat by traditions and myths concerning a female Yamato ruler, the famous Queen Jingū, who must have lived at about that time and who is said to have received help and guidance from various kami while personally leading an expeditionary force against the Korean kingdom of Silla.[10]

New archaeological data provide convincing evidence that many areas of cultural life on the Japanese islands were being profoundly altered at that time by innovations introduced through the Korean peninsula, giving the entire Yamato period a Korean and northeast Asian coloration that is clearly seen in artifacts, burial practices, rituals, myths, and language, a coloration surely not created by sporadic military expeditions or diplomatic missions alone but by sizable migrations as well. Therefore when concluding that Japan lay within the Chinese cultural orbit in that early part of the Yamato period, as well as before and later, one should remember that contact with the Chinese center was mainly through the sinified kingdoms of Korea.

Ancient mounds

Because our principal source of information about Japanese life during the Yamato period comes from burial mounds built for deceased leaders, historians have given special attention to their nature, contents, and distribution. Scholars who have studied burial practices all over the world note, first, that large mounds were constructed for deceased rulers in other parts of the world when and where kingdoms were emerging under hereditary rule. In China, for example, huge mounds

9 See Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 191–205 for a review of evidential problems. Lee Chin-hui, "Kōtai-ō hi to shichishitō," in *Kodai Nihon to Chōsen bunka* (Tokyo: Purejidentosha, 1979), pp. 95–132, criticized traditional Japanese interpretations; Takeda Yukio reexamined earlier views in "Kōkaido-ō hibun shinbō nenjō no saigimmi," in Inoue Mitsusada hakushi kanreki kinen kai, ed., *Kodai shi ronsō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 48–84.

10 The *Nihon shoki* devotes Book 9 to her reign, Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōne Susumu, et al., eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 67, pp. 330–61. W. G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Time to* A.D. *697* (hereafter cited as Aston) (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pt. 1, pp. 224–53. The *Kojiki* treatment is in bk. 2, NKBT 1.229–38; translated by Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, and Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), pp. 262–71.

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were erected as early as the closing years of the Spring and Autumn period (721 to 481 B.C.). In Korea, too, they were constructed for the burial of kings who ruled each of the three kingdoms that arose and flourished in the fourth century A.D., just when Yamato was expanding under rulers who built enormous mounds for their deceased predecessors. Although the mounds of each region had their own special character, those erected in Japan and Korea (especially in Paekche and Silla) during the fourth century were enough alike to suggest both a parallel process of political centralization and a continuous and direct flow of cultural imports from Korea to central Japan.

These large mounds did not suddenly appear in Japan at the beginning of the Yamato period, however. Shiraishi Taichirō reports that rather large ones were constructed on hills or knolls – a characteristic feature of the early Yamato mounds – during the last part of the previous Yayoi period. These were usually square in shape and surrounded by moats, not unlike those found at that time and earlier in China and north Asia. Toward the middle years of Yayoi – still a century or so before the rise of the Yamato kingdom in central Japan – such knoll mounds (*funkyūbo*) were built in a zone extending from Chūgoku and Shikoku in the west to the Kantō plain in the northeast.[11] Tsude Hiroshi points out that the digging of moats around knoll mounds in middle Yayoi times had been paralleled by the practice of surrounding a village with a ditch, dirt wall, or board fence and that this had been a Chinese custom since the disturbed centuries that preceded the founding of the Han dynasty in 206 B.C. Tsude surmises that although these defenses in Yayoi Japan may have been installed to protect a village against floods and wild animals, they were also meant to protect the village from human enemies. Such defense works suggest that individual relationships within the community were already becoming close, and external relations tense, long before third-century Chinese chronicles report endemic military strife on the Japanese islands.[12]

The knoll mounds of late Yayoi were not only quite large, ranging between forty and eighty meters long, but had other characteristics of a Yamato period mound. In addition to being built on a knoll or hill, a few had the keyhole shape long thought to be a unique feature of the later Yamato mounds. Moreover, many pre-Yamato knoll mounds had horizontal stone cists for the burial of one particular person, and some

11 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 161–2.
12 Tsude Hiroshi, "Nōkō shakai no keisei," in *Genshi-kodai*, pp. 131–6.

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were surrounded by clay tubes of a type later called *haniwa*.[13] Such a late Yayoi knoll mound has been found at the Makimuku site in Sakurai in Nara Prefecture (quite close to the early Yamato burial mounds) and also as far east as Ichihara in Chiba Prefecture. Some historians are inclined to think that these large knoll mounds should be classified as Yamato, but Shiraishi believes that they were made for leaders at a pre-Yamato stage of centralization, for leaders who had brought several agricultural communities (possibly all those in one valley) under their control but had not yet accumulated power and authority equal to that of a Yamato king. And yet these earlier knoll burials leave the impression that an ideology of hereditary control had begun to emerge, for they were clearly places to perform rites centered on sacred ties between living and deceased as well as between rulers and their divine ancestors.[14]

The Shiki center

Most of what we know about the first century of the Yamato period comes from archaeological discoveries made in the southeastern corner of the Nara plain, in the Shiki area at the base of Mt. Miwa (see Map 2.1). These discoveries were made largely at, or in the neighborhood of, six mounds built between about A.D. 250 and 350 and in the following order: (1) the Hashihaka in the city of Sakurai, 280 meters long; (2) the Nishitonozuka in the city of Tenri, 230 meters; (3) the Tobi Chausu-yama of Sakurai, 207 meters; (4) the Mesuri-yama of Sakurai, 240 meters, (5) the Ando-yama (now referred to as the Sujin tomb) in Tenri, 240 meters; and (6) the Shibutani Muko-yama (known as the Keikō tomb), 310 meters. Although these six mounds, like a few earlier knoll burials, have the famous keyhole shape as well as horizontal stone chambers, they also have other features that permit us to associate their construction with the emergence of the Yamato kingdom. First, they are exceptionally large: Each of the six is at least twice as large as any mound found in Korea. Second, they all were

13 A spectacular pre-Yamato knoll burial was found at the Tatetsuki site near Kurashiki in Okayama Prefecture. The main portion of the square mound is forty meters across but has projections on opposite sides that increase its width to between seventy and eighty meters. At the top of the mound are five stone pillars with carved surface designs, and the mound is surrounded by two rows of rocks with small stones spread between. It was for multiple burials but had a special place for a wooden coffin that included various jewels and an iron sword. Kondō Yoshirō's report is summarized in Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," p. 162.

14 Ibid., pp. 163–5. No clear connections have been made between pre-Yamato knoll mounds and the "country of Yamatai" mentioned in the *Wei shu*, or between Yamatai and Yamato.

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Map 2.1 Shrines and burial mounds, Yamato. (Based on *Nihon rekishi chizu*, 1986, Map 8.)

built, one after another, in the Shiki area. And third, they contained impressive coffins made of split bamboo and pine and are surrounded by large numbers of mirrors, weapons, tools, and ornaments. In sum, the discovery of a series of such huge mounds built in the same Shiki area roughly between A.D. 250 and 350 leaves little doubt that they were for successive rulers of a new and expanding Yamato kingdom. Earlier Yayoi knoll mounds had been for leaders of federations of agricultural communities, but these later Yamato mounds, even in the early part of this period, were for a line of powerful priest-kings who stood high above all people in an increasingly large part of the Japanese islands.[15]

Studies made by Tsude Hiroshi help us understand that the rise and rapid growth of Yamato was made possible by a sharp increase in agricultural production. His investigations of developments in the use of iron for making agricultural tools, techniques for leveling off and irrigating fields for wet-rice agriculture, and the expansion of upland

15 Ibid., pp. 170–1.

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farming lead him to conclude that the last part of the third century was a time of explosive agricultural growth.[16] This seems to have enabled Yamato kings to marshal the human and physical resources needed for constructing huge mounds, undertaking ambitious military campaigns into distant parts of the country, and extending their control, before the close of the fourth century, to territory as far away as the Korean peninsula.

At the Makimuku site in the present city of Sakurai, where two of these six burial mounds are located, pottery had been found dating back to preagricultural times, that is, several hundred years before the first Yamato mounds were built. About 150 meters west of these pre-Yamato digs, archaeologists have found two irrigation ditches about 6 meters wide and between 1.3 and 1.5 meters deep in which were several early Yamato pots.[17] Such finds suggest that stable communities had existed in this part of the Nara plain before the appearance of the Yamato kingdom and that the rise of Yamato was indeed abetted by a sharp increase in rice productivity resulting, in part at least, from the introduction of improved methods of keeping rice fields flooded during the growing season.

As has been generally true of the rise of kingdoms in other parts of the world, the birth of Yamato around the last half of the third century was intimately connected with the worship of local deities (kami), giving the Yamato kings both sacral and secular functions. By studying myths that were continuously recast and revised before existing versions were written down at the beginning of the eighth century and by searching for the meaning of materials excavated from neighboring religious sites, historians are beginning to detect a pattern of interaction between the rule of early Yamato rulers and the worship of the kami believed to reside on Mt. Miwa.

Ancient myths and traditions indicate that Mt. Miwa was (and still is) a sacred mountain where particularly powerful kami were worshiped, and now archaeological investigations reveal that all six of these burial mounds were built at the foot of Mt. Miwa. Even before historians were certain that Yamato's earliest kings had any special connection with the kami residing on Mt. Miwa, they had become interested in the Ōmiwa Shrine – the major religious institution for the worship of the Mt. Miwa kami – as this was clearly a place where ancient rites have been preserved. These historians seem to have been

16 Tsude, "Nōgyō shakai no keisei," pp. 121–31.
17 Archaeological findings are summarized in Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 56–87.

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intrigued, above all, by the observation that the Ōmiwa Shrine, unlike most other shrines, has no central hall of worship (*shinden*) for the enshrinement of its "kami body" (*shintai*), that Mt. Miwa itself has always been revered as the "kami body." In 1971, archaeologists investigated sites on and around the sacred mountain, unearthing offerings and religious symbols that point to a close link between the rule of Yamato's first kings and the worship of Mt. Miwa's kami.

With incontestable proof of early connections between the new Yamato kingdom and the ancient worship of a kami residing on Mt. Miwa, scholars now see deeper levels of historical meaning in myths that affirm sacred ties between the Yamato kings and particular kami, especially in myths centered on King Sujin, who is thought to have been buried in the fifth Shiki mound. The *Nihon shoki* devotes more space to the Sujin reign than to any earlier one except the first, and it states that Sujin was a ruler who gave serious attention "to the worship of kami and to his heavenly duties."[18] Early in the Sujin reign, according to this chronicle, the kingdom suffered a number of calamities that led Sujin to seek advice and assistance from the kami. Sujin is said to have then received a revelation, transmitted to him by a princess, that conditions would improve if the kami making the revelation were worshiped. When asked which kami was speaking, the reply was, "I am Ōmono Nushi no Kami worshipped within the borders of Yamato" [and residing on Mt. Miwa]. Still another revelation indicated that Ōmono Nushi wished to be worshiped in rites conducted by his own child, Ōtata Neko, and we read that after such rites were held, the calamities ceased.[19]

The sacred connection between the early Yamato kings and the kami residing on Mt. Miwa is the subject of another myth recorded in both the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki,* but with differences. In the *Nihon shoki* we read of a love affair between the kami of Mt. Miwa and a princess named Yamato Totohi Momoso. This version has the kami appearing only at night, causing the princess to request her lover to let himself be seen. The kami acceded to her request saying that he would enter her toilet case on the following morning, but he asked that she not be alarmed by what she would see. When the princess opened her toilet case, she saw a small but beautiful snake that horrified her. Her reaction angered the kami, who turned himself into a human being, upbraided the princess for disregarding his request, and dashed off

18 Sujin, Introduction, NKBT 67.236; Aston, 1. 150.
19 Sujin 7/2/15, NKBT 67.238–40; Aston, 1. 152–3.

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toward Mt. Miwa. The princess was so unnerved that, according to the story, she stabbed herself to death with chopsticks. Her body was then buried in a mound called the Hashihaka (chopstick grave), one of the six burial mounds located at the base of Mt. Miwa.[20] The *Kojiki* version is different but is still centered on a sacred marriage of the Miwa kami to a female relative of an early Yamato king, a union from which was born a son who founded the Miwa line of kings (*kimi*) and conducted rites for the Mt. Miwa kami.[21] Relating the implications of these myths to archaeological finds on Mt. Miwa, Ueda Masaaki and others deduce that Yamato's first kings sanctified and strengthened their authority by identifying themselves with the already-established worship of the Mt. Miwa kami.[22]

Having detected historical meaning in the mythological explanation of ties between the kami of Mt. Miwa and the kings of Yamato – ties that have now been confirmed by archaeological findings in the Shiki area of Yamato – historians are paying closer attention to other items in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* (completed in the eighth century) about events in the Sujin reign. In addition to reporting a Sujin preoccupation with the power of the kami to prevent widespread disaster, the *Nihon shoki* states that he raised armies, sent off princes on military expeditions, dealt with a revolt, removed enemy heads, and observed soldiers taking off their armor before escaping.[23] Although these items may have been added at a later time – as were a number of words and phrases found in this Sujin chapter – we are left with the impression that the birth of the Yamato kingdom was facilitated by the use of military force. The comment that Sujin received tribute from the Korean kingdom of Mimana (Korean: Kaya) cannot be accepted as historical fact, and yet it seems that Yamato had generated enough power by the middle of the fourth century to undertake military action in areas well outside the Nara plain.

The Saki center

After the middle of the fourth century, the Yamato kings were no longer buried in the Shiki District of Yamato but farther north in Saki, in the northwest corner of the present city of Nara. The burial mounds of Saki include the Gosashi (now referred to as the Jingū tomb) which is 275 meters long, the Horaisan (now known as the Suinin tomb), 227 meters

20 Sujin 10/9/27, NKBT 67.246–7; Aston, 1. 158–9.
21 Bk. 2, NKBT 1.181–2; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 203–4.
22 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 56–74. 23 Sujin 10/9/27, NKBT 67.244–6; Aston, 1. 156–8.

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long, and two others measuring more than 200 meters. These Saki mounds, like those of Shiki, are thought to have been built successively and not simply to console and honor the souls of the deceased Yamato kings but to symbolize and affirm the divine authority transmitted to living successors, the mound builders. Those kings buried in the Saki mounds had apparently inherited the authority of their Shiki predecessors, greatly expanded Yamato wealth and control, and passed such accumulated power and authority to their lineal descendants.[24]

Yamato expansion into other regions of Japan during these final years of the fourth century seems to have provided the background for tales, recorded in both the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*, of Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto's military exploits. These include so many passages about divine assistance received from kami and other supernatural beings that one is tempted to dismiss them as myths without historical significance.[25] But the inclusion of details about events that may well have taken place, plus the heroic quality noted by Ishimoda and others, suggest that they arose from successful military campaigns that first brought regions to the west, and then to the northeast, under Yamato control.

The last half of the fourth century when the Yamato kings were buried in the Saki area was not simply a time of Yamato expansion made possible by the use of armies equipped with iron weapons but when the Yamato kings became deeply involved in kami worship at a different kind of shrine: the Isonokami. Kings continued to honor the kami of Mt. Miwa,[26] but after palaces and mounds were built farther north – apparently because the kings came to be tied to the strong clans (*uji*) in that area – Isonokami seems to have become the leading Yamato shrine. By studying its connections with the Yamato kings and powerful clans and reflecting on the nature and implications of the shrine's sacred treasures and unique traditions, historians are gaining a clearer picture of the religiopolitical control structure that emerged in Yamato during the final years of the fourth century.

Archaeological evidence supports the view that the Isonokami Shrine did not become prominent until the locus of Yamato power had been shifted to Saki. And myths recorded in the *Nihon shoki* chapter for the reign of Suinin – the king said to have been buried in the

24 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 171–3.

25 *Nihon shoki* Keikō 27/10 to Keikō 43, NKBT 67.298–311; Aston, 1. 200–11; *Kojiki* Bk. 2; NKBT 1.209–27; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 234–54; and see n. 4.

26 A 581 *Nihon shoki* report tells of several thousand Emishi making a vow of loyalty to the Yamato court while facing Mt. Miwa: Bidatsu 10/2, NKBT 68.141–2; Aston, 1. 96.

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second of the Saki mounds – were obviously devised and repeated in order to sanctify the bonds between Yamato rule and Isonokami worship. A key mythological story, pieced together from references scattered throughout the chapter on Suinin's long reign, begins with Suinin's asking his two sons what they would like most to have. The eldest son, Inishiki no Mikoto, asked for bows and arrows, and the youngest, for the throne. Both reportedly got what they wanted: The elder son received his bows and arrows (suggesting military assignments), and the younger son succeeded Suinin as king. This myth, inserted as an item for the thirtieth year of the Suinin reign, was apparently intended to explain how the younger son came to succeed his father as King Keikō.[27] But it also tied Isonokami worship to Yamato rulers through Suinin's eldest son.

The *Nihon shoki*'s entries for the thirty-fifth year of the Suinin reign state that this eldest son (Prince Inishiki no Mikoto) had a thousand swords made and that he was placed in charge of Isonokami's divine treasures. Later on we read that he founded the Mononobe clan and that thenceforth a succession of Mononobe clan chieftains served as custodians of Isonokami treasures.[28] Even if these entries were later additions or revisions, they were undoubtedly meant to affirm the sacred connections between the military interests of a Yamato king and his son, and between the military functions of the Mononobe clan and the military treasures of Isonokami. This mythological linkage certainly reflected a very real and rapid expansion of Yamato control – made possible by a far more extensive use of iron weapons – that became the subject of recorded tales about the heroic military exploits of Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, who led campaigns to various parts of Japan, and of Queen Jingū, who led military expeditions against overseas enemies.

The military character of Isonokami worship is disclosed not simply in myths about its association with military clan leaders but also in reports that indicate that the shrine's treasures were mainly weapons. Although Ueda gives little or no credence to the *Nihon shoki* statement that the sword that Susa no O no Mikoto used to kill the legendary eight-headed serpent was deposited at Isonokami, he concludes that many of the kingdom's iron weapons were stored at Isonokami during the last half of the fourth century.[29] His conclusion is strengthened, and infused with socioreligious meaning, by the deduction that the most important buildings of a shrine in those days, especially at the

27 Suinin 30/1/6, NKBT 67.272; Aston, 1. 179–80.
28 Suinin 39/10 and 87/2, NKBT 67.276–7; Aston, 1. 183–4.
29 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 141–2.

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Isonokami, were its storehouses. Indeed, one particular fourth-century sword, still kept in the Isonokami storehouse, has attracted special attention because it bears a dated inscription stating that the sword was forged in Paekche during the year 369 for presentation to the king of Yamato.

This famous gold-inlaid sword, the *shichishitō* or "seven-pronged sword" (designated as a Japanese National Treasure), was obviously not meant to be a weapon but a symbol of authority. It looks like a spear with three prongs on each side. Measuring about 75 centimeters long, it has thirty-four characters inscribed on one side and twenty-seven on the other. Because of centuries of rusting, seven of the characters cannot be deciphered. In 1873 a chief priest of Isonokami noticed and reported that characters had been inscribed on the shrine's ancient treasure. Early attempts to decipher them have led historians to decide that this was the very same "seven-pronged sword" mentioned in the Jingū chapter of the *Nihon shoki*.[30] In fact, the three characters for *shichishitō* inscribed on the sword are the same ones used in the following *Nihon shoki* report:

> On the 10th day of the 9th month in the autumn of the 52nd year of this reign, Kutyo and others accompanied by Chikuma Nagahiko presented a *shichishitō* and a seven knobed mirror, saying
> "To the west of your minister's country is a river, the source of which is Mount Ch'ŏlsan ('Iron Mountain'). It does not take seven days to reach that source. By drinking the water from this river, and taking iron from the mountain, presentations (of iron) can be made indefinitely to Your Majesty's court."

Then, according to the *Nihon shoki*, a message from the Paekche king's grandson was read. The prince expressed satisfaction that relations had been opened up between the two kingdoms and said that he expected to continue offering presents in order to ensure friendly relations.[31] The reference to iron mining on Mt. Ch'ŏlsan suggests that the envoy was well aware of the Yamato demand for iron ore with which to make weapons and tools.

Years of research by both Japanese and Korean scholars have created a fair degree of certainty – although much of the inscription has not yet been worked out – that the sword was made in Paekche in 369, subsequently presented to a Yamato king, and eventually placed in the Isonokami storehouse. For years a debate has raged, mainly between Japanese and Korean historians, as to whether the inscribed words

30 Studies of the sword are outlined in ibid., pp. 145–55.
31 Jingū 52/9/10, NKBT 67.358; Aston, 1. 251.

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meant that the sword was being presented to a superior or to an inferior. Three different theories have emerged: (1) that it was presented by a Paekche king to his Yamato superior; (2) that it was presented by a Paekche king to his Yamato inferior; and (3) that it was presented by an Eastern Chin ruler, through a Paekche king, to his Yamato inferior. Although we may never obtain proof of what status was assigned by a Paekche or Yamato ruler to his foreign counterpart or whether the assigned status was accepted, the existence of the sword with its dated incription stands as concrete and convincing evidence that the rulers of Paekche and Yamato were in contact with each other during the last half of the fourth century and that swords and iron were then highly valued.[32]

Paekche and Yamato

Paekche's relations with its neighboring kingdoms in the last half of the fourth century help us understand what the sword presentation signified. Its date is given in terms of an era name of Eastern Chin, which emerged in south China in 317 and disappeared in 420. The use of this era name in a Paekche inscription strengthens the view that Paekche had accepted a tributary relationship with the Eastern Chin court. As we noted, Paekche had begun to challenge the authority of Koguryŏ after the collapse of Lo-lang in 313 and during the reign of the Paekche king Kŭn Ch'ogo (346 to 375) fought a series of bloody battles with its northern neighbor. The struggle had become quite serious by 369 when the seven-pronged sword was made. Korean accounts tell us that Paekche forces actually invaded Koguryŏ's capital in 371 and killed the Koguryŏ king in 372. The Chinese chronicles state that after winning these victories, Paekche sent tribute to Eastern Chin, that Eastern Chin dispatched a mission to Paekche, and that a Chinese envoy awarded the post of "commander for pacifying lands to the east" to the Paekche king. Ueda feels that by establishing a tributary relationship with Paekche, Eastern Chin was attempting to regain control over Korean territory that had been seized by Koguryŏ when Lo-lang fell. In 377 Paekche also sent tribute to the Chinese court of the Former Tsou, suggesting that Paekche was attempting to have its victories against Koguryŏ recognized by both Chinese courts. These attempts to gain Chinese recognition may have contributed, consciously or unconsciously, to a concurrent preoccupation with such

32 See n. 9.

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basic forms of Chinese learning as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Chinese law.[33]

Paekche's interest in obtaining Yamato support was probably sharpened by the expansionist tendencies of Silla, a kingdom located east of Paekche and the third one to emerge during the fourth century. Silla was then allying itself with Koguryŏ in opposing Paekche.[34] References to Silla in Japanese chronicles, particularly in sections devoted to the Jingū campaign against Silla, claim that the Yamato kings were disturbed by Silla advances against small kingdoms along the Tsushima Straits, an area where Yamato had traditionally exercised some control. Thus Paekche and Yamato may have been drawn together by a common desire to check Silla aggression.

But earlier views regarding Yamato's influence over kingdoms on the southern tip of Korea, even entitling Yamato to tribute, are now questioned. Little or no valid support can be found for the claim that Yamato was then obtaining tribute from Mimana (K: Kaya). Ueda reminds us that the *Kojiki* contains no references to Mimana, that the most specific *Nihon shoki* items are for a later time in the Yamato period, and that Korean sources include only a few comments about such a kingdom and none at all about its being under Yamato control. As for Kaya, which some historians assert was a Yamato colony, Ueda believes that neither Korean historical sources nor archaeological findings support such a claim.[35] Nevertheless, the Jingū tradition, the presentation of the seven-pronged sword (made in Paekche in 369) to a Yamato ruler, and the 414 memorial inscription mentioning a Japanese invasion of Korea in 391 indicate that Paekche desired Yamato's support.

The conclusion that Yamato's relations with the Korean kingdoms had become more active during the last half of the fourth century – when burial mounds were being built in the Saki area around Nara – has been greatly reinforced by archaeological discoveries at sites all over Japan that reveal a continuous flow of materials, techniques, and immigrants from the Korean peninsula into Japan during these

33 The current Korean situation and relations between Paekche and Yamato in this first part of the Yamato period are summarized in Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 156–63; Suzuki, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei," pp. 198–203; and Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 36–40.

34 Suzuki, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei," pp. 202–3.

35 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 170–4. Yamao Yukihisa rejects the view that Yamato forces advanced into central Korea from a place called Mimana. See Yamao Yukihisa, *Nihon kokka no keisei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shinsho, 1977). Ki-baik Lee, in his *A New History of Korea*, makes no mention of Mimana, referring always to the southern kingdom as Kaya. Here the *Nihon shoki*'s references to the kingdom as Mimana will be rendered as Mimana (Kaya) but elsewhere as Kaya.

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years. Particularly significant excavations have been made on the island of Okinoshima, the Munakata Shrine's "kami body" located off the coast of northern Kyushu. This is where ships traveling to and from Korea had stopped since early times to make offerings (*nie*) in order to obtain (or to express gratitude for) a safe and successful crossing. Recent investigations have been carried out at twenty-four sites located about twenty meters from a boat landing where ceremonial objects of various types have been found. These show that offerings were placed on this sacred island continuously from the fourth century (at the beginning of the Yamato period) to the ninth (when the dispatch of official missions to China was discontinued). At the Ganjō site on Okinoshima, archaeologists have found nine iron tools that demonstrate definite connections between the Munakata Shrine and southern Korea in the last half of the fourth century.[36]

Thus historians now are confident that the first century and a half of the Yamato period was a time of vigorous growth and expansion. They feel that court control had been extended to western and northeastern regions of the Japanese islands, as is suggested by Yamato Takeru no Mikoto's mythical military exploits and by new archaeological evidence.[37] The view that Yamato took part in Korean wars is reinforced by (1) myths of Queen Jingū's divinely assisted and personally led military expedition against Silla, (2) the seven-pronged sword bearing the date 369, (3) the inscription carved on the 414 monument found in north Korea, and (4) offerings made in Okinoshima as early as the fourth century for a safe and successful passage between Korea and Japan. With further investigations of thousands of archaeological sites scattered all over northeast Asia, we are certain to learn far more about changes in the life of the people living on the islands of Japan during these early years of the Yamato period.

YAMATO EXPANSION

The second part of the Yamato period, roughly the fifth century, was a time of spectacular development.[38] This was when the largest burial

36 Extensive archaeological research was carried out in 1954, 1957–58, and again in 1969–71; See Okazaki Takashi, Oda Fumio et al., eds., *Munakata Okinoshima* (Munakata taisha fukkō kiseikai, 1958 and 1961). Inoue Mitsusada analyzed the new evidence in "Kodai Okinoshima no saishi," in *Kodai chūsei no shakai to shisō*, vol. 1 of Ienaga Saburō kyōju Tōkyō kyōiku daigaku taikan kinen ronshū kankō iinkai, ed., *Ienaga Saburō kyōju Tōkyo kyōiku daigaku taikan kinen ronshū*, no. 1 (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1979), pp. 48–77; and Ueda discusses its significance for early years of the Yamato period, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 205–19.

37 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 178–82.

38 Although the power base was moved from Yamato to the provinces of Kawachi and Izumi early in the fifth century, the state will continue to be referred to as Yamato, for it was still based in an area drained by the Yamato River.

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mounds were constructed; fairly complex irrigation systems were built; the kings devoted more attention to military affairs than to kami ritual; Yamato utilized a growing network of clans (*uji*) and occupational groups (*be*) to increase its wealth and power; control was extended to most of the Japanese islands and to parts of the Korean peninsula; and the Yamato kings obtained appointments to and recognition from the Chinese court of Southern Sung. We will briefly describe these remarkable changes, giving special attention to the reigns of Nintoku (who was buried in the largest mound) and Yūryaku (who sent gifts and a memorial to the Southern Sung court).

The Kawachi–Izumi center

After about A.D. 400, the largest burial mounds were no longer built in the Saki area of northern Yamato but in southern Kawachi and northern Izumi, across the Kongō Mountains to the west and near the shores of the Inland Sea. The Furuichi group, within the present city of Fujiidera, includes the Nakatsu-yama, which is 285 meters long, and the Konda Gobyō-yama, known as the Ōjin tomb, which is 420 meters long. Important burial mounds in the Mozu group of Izumi are the Upper Ishizu Misanzai, known as the Richū tomb (365 meters long), the Daisen-ryō or great Nintoku tomb (486 meters), and the Haji Nisanzai (290 meters). Historians and archaeologists are now in general agreement that all five were built during the fifth century and that they were constructed alternately in Kawachi and Izumi.

Kondo Yoshiro agrees that the power center of Yamato, which had been located at the foot of Mt. Miwa in southeastern Yamato, was moved first to the Saki area in north Yamato around the year 350 and then to Kawachi and Izumi after about 400, at the beginning of the second part of the Yamato period. But he does not explain why these moves were made. Shiraishi Taiichirō is inclined to think they resulted from power shifts within or between clan federations that supported the Yamato court, that when a different clan (or different clan combination) surfaced, a great burial mound for a deceased king was built within the area dominated by that clan.[39] Hirano Kunio also advances the thesis that the highest-ranking queen was then, as in later centuries, a daughter of the most powerful court-supporting clan and that

39 Kondō Yoshirō, *Zempō kōenfun no jidai* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1983); Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," p. 174.

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her son by a Yamato king succeeded him on the throne. Shiraishi thinks that although clan groups may well have had connections of this sort with the kings buried in the Shiki area of Yamato (such as the Sofu group in north Yamato and the Katsuragi to the west) before 350, their chieftains were not yet buried in impressive mounds. But with the shift to the Saki area around 350, clan federations seem to have become stronger, causing Shiraishi to wonder whether it was not the leader of such a federation who was buried in the Gosashi mound. After about 400, when burial mounds were built alternately in Kawachi and Izumi, two powerful federations – one based in southern Kawachi and the other in northern Izumi – appear to have dominated the Yamato court, and to have also supported the enthronement of blood-related kings who were later buried in huge mounds.[40]

What was significantly different about these fifth-century burial mounds? First, they are substantially larger than the earlier ones. Three of the five listed are larger than the biggest (the 310-meter Keikō mound) ever erected in earlier years. The Nintoku mound of Izumi is 486 meters long, covers approximately 60 hectares, and was originally encircled by three moats and a larger number of clay figurines (*haniwa*). Known as Japan's largest burial mound, its construction is thought to have required a thousand or more men working from morning till night for four years to complete. These post-400 mounds of Izumi and Kawachi were, moreover, built on relatively level land – not on knolls and hills, as in earlier times, where mound building required much less labor. The great size of the Izumi and Kawachi burials, as well as their construction on or near arable land, produced a far more impressive symbolization of economic and political power. If one bears in mind that these later mounds also contained vast quantities of valued grave goods, one cannot but conclude that they were built and stocked by the Yamato kings, who now controlled far more territory and possessed much greater wealth.

The second difference was that the Yamato rulers now gave more attention to military affairs and less to kami ritual. This shift is noticed first in the archaeological discovery that the fifth-century mounds contained more weapons and military gear made of iron and fewer ceremonial items such as bronze mirrors and sacred jewels. Particularly significant are the contents of mounds erected for a Yamato king's retainer. In one located near the Ōjin mound, archaeologists

40 Hirano Kunio, "Iwayuru kodai ōchō ron," *Kokushigaku* 103 (1977): 1–14; Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 174–5.

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found 77 iron swords, 62 iron arrowheads, 203 iron sickles, and numerous other iron implements.[41]

The view that a fifth-century ruler was more like a secular ruler than a priestly king is further substantiated by what is recorded in *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* chapters on Ōjin and Nintoku, two Yamato kings buried in the Kawachi–Izumi area. Unlike the chapter for the earlier Sujin reign, which is replete with myths about special ties between the Yamato rulers and local kami, the Ōjin and Nintoku chapters include very few references to kami. Instead they concentrate on such secular matters as receiving envoys from Korea, gathering immigrants for building ponds, accepting tribute, going on royal hunting expeditions, coping with royal love affairs, settling conflicting claims to the throne, establishing title to rice lands, putting down a Emishi rebellion in northern Japan, building palaces and irrigation systems, and raising an army to invade Silla. The *Nihon shoki* does include an item about a first-of-the-year festival, but most of it is devoted to comments about the ladies drinking saké during the festivities and adorning themselves with jewelry.[42]

One ceremony held at the beginning of a new reign was religious in character but did not involve the worship of a local kami. Called the Yasojima festival and scheduled for the year after enthronement, it was focused on priests and *miko* (shamans) proceeding to the capital at Naniwa where the souls of the Yasojima ("eighty islands") were ritually attached to the current Yamato king. In associated rites and myths, the islands of Onogoro and Awaji are prominent, and instead of honoring a local kami, the Yasojima festival underscores a Yamato king's origins in distant places of the Inland Sea. Ueda notes that Awaji was also prominent in the Izanami–Izanagi creation of the Japanese islands and that the mysterious birth of Ōjin – born to Jingū after her return from a victorious campaign in Korea – linked kami "from across the sea" to such distant lands as Izumo.[43]

The fifth-century shift in the locus of power to the Kawachi–Izumi area, coupled with the concurrent military expansion and agricultural development, has sharpened interest in the view that Yamato was then headed by a new line of rulers. Few historians have gone so far as to say that this was when horse-riding invaders seized control and started a new royal line, but most would agree that a break appeared in the Yamato kings' line of descent, a break that is suggested by the "across

41 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, p. 247.
42 Bks. 10 and 11, NKBT 67.362–417; Aston, 1. 254–300.
43 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 239–41.

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the sea" character of the Yasojima festival. One cannot help but see, in this connection, significance in the way Japan's early chronicles introduce Ōjin – the first Yamato king after the break – as the son of the mythical and shamanistic Queen Jingū. The *Kojiki* contains the following version of a dialogue among her, the Sun Goddess (the ancestral kami of Japan's emperors), and the ritualist who was conducting a Great Exorcism held after the death of Chūai and while Jingū was pregnant:

Sun Goddess to Jingū: This land is the land to be ruled by the child that is in your womb.

Ritualist to the Sun Goddess: Awesome great kami, what sex is the child inside in the kami (possessed) womb?

Sun Goddess to Jingū: A boy.

Ritualist to the Sun Goddess: What is the name of the great kami who speaks?

Sun Goddess to Jingū: This is the will of the Sun Goddess, and of the three sea kami . . . [worshiped at Sumiyoshi].[44]

The *Nihon shoki* contains lengthy stories of Jingū's receiving guidance and support from various kami during her overseas campaign against the Korean kingdom of Silla and about the miraculous birth of Ōjin. Although it does not say that the Sun Goddess divinely selected Ōjin as the future "ruler of the land," it does state that "when [Ōjin] was in his mother's womb, the kami of heaven and earth granted him three Korean provinces."[45]

A study of the names of the Yamato kings also suggests that a new descent line began with Ōjin. After noting that the Yamato kings did not have clan names, Ueda calls our attention to the practice of inserting the word *iri* into the names (*imina*) of kings descended from Sujin. Then he notes that *iri* disappears from the names of kings after Ōjin and that this king and his successors were given names that included the title *wake*. The earlier *iri* (entered) title suggested that a kami of Miwa was believed to have entered (or divinely possessed) each king on a descent line beginning with Sujin, whose burial mound is thought to be one of those located at the foot of Mt. Miwa. But *wake*, used in the personal name of Ōjin and his successors and denoting divine possession, was mythically linked to kami worshiped at shrines as far north as the prefectures of Fukui and Noto. So the *wake* title and its associated myths may indicate the start of a new royal line connected

44 Bk. 2, NKBT 1.229–31; Philippi, *Kojiki*, bk. 2. chap. 93, pp. 259–61.
45 Ōjin, Introduction, NKBT 67.362; Aston, 1. 255.

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with the coastal regions north of the Nara plain. The mysterious, distant, and sea-connected origins of Ōjin are also embedded in traditions of his being born to the shamanistic Jingū in northern Kyushu and arriving at Naniwa in a boat.[46]

The military strength and material wealth of fifth-century Yamato arose in large measure from great increases in the production of rice. Historians have long been fascinated by a *Nihon shoki* item for the fourteenth year of the Nintoku reign telling about the construction of a great canal that channeled water from the Ishikawa River to uncultivated areas of four Kawachi districts: Upper and Lower Suzuka and Upper and Lower Toyura. This vast irrigation project apparently increased the area of land devoted to rice production by several thousand acres, enriching the peasants and alleviating the threat of poor crops.[47] Because the *Nihon shoki* was compiled over two centuries later, historians have wondered whether the compilers did not assign to the Nintoku reign an event that occurred much later. But archaeologists have recently discovered a canal (the Furuichi no Ōmizo) and found that repairs on it may have been made early in the fifth century. Because the canal was dug near the burial mound thought to be that of Ōjin (the king whose reign immediately preceded that of Nintoku) and repairs may have been made on the canal around the time this mound was built, earlier suspicions about the veracity of the *Nihon shoki* reference have been partially dispelled.[48] Other chronicle items report the construction of canals, ponds, and dikes during the reign of Nintoku.

Contributions made by immigrant technicians to boosting rice production is revealed in the *Kojiki*'s outline of Nintoku's accomplishments. Although the account is devoted mainly to the women he married and the children he sired, the final sentences report the establishment of particular *be* (occupational groups) and end with the statement that a Korean group was conscripted to complete several irrigation projects, including building the Mamuta River embankment and digging two ponds and two canals.[49] The *Nihon shoki* also contains a story about the Mamuta embankment that, according to the *Kojiki*, had been constructed by a Korean group. Inserted in a *Nihon shoki* entry for the eleventh year of the same Nintoku reign, the story is introduced with comments about the difficulty of repairing two breaks in the Mamuta dike.

46 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 75–87, 220–8, 246.
47 Nintoku 14/11, NKBT 67.396; Aston, 1. 283. 48 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 242–3.
49 Bk. 3, NKBT 1.265–7; Philippi, *Kojiki*, bk. 3, chap. 109, pp. 301–2.

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One night, as the tale goes, Nintoku dreamed that the breaks could be repaired if two of his officials, one from eastern Japan and one from Kawachi, made offerings to the river kami. The two men approached the kami differently. While the easterner threw himself into the river as a sacrifice, the Kawachi man (probably an immigrant), after tossing a gourd into the river, vowed to sacrifice himself only if the gourd sank. The gourd simply drifted off, and yet the dike was successfully repaired without an additional sacrifice of life.[50] This story is usually cited when analyzing changes in Japanese attitudes toward kami, but it also reveals Nintoku's preoccupation with the importance of irrigation projects that increased rice production and with the value of immigrants who knew how to build and repair dikes. On the basis of such evidence, it is concluded that kings of fifth-century Yamato were able to extend their control to other regions of Japan and to Korea not solely because of their more extensive use of imported military techniques but also because of economic benefits accruing from the work of immigrants who knew how to construct and maintain irrigation systems.

The fifth-century prominence of the Naniwa harbor and of the Sumiyoshi Shrine – both located on the shore of the Inland Sea to the west of Izumi and Kawachi in the southern part of Settsu – also point to Yamato involvement in military and commercial activities in regions along and beyond the Inland Sea. Situated at the mouth of the great Yamato River, Naniwa became, during the fifth century, an active harbor for all seaborne traffic with such important western regions as Kibi, Tsukushi, and southern Korea. Although we have no detailed reports on the number and size of boats that entered and left Naniwa in those years, the port's importance is reflected in the myth that tells of Ōjin's arriving there by boat and also in chronicle reports that both Ōjin and Nintoku had built palaces there. The discovery of huge fifth-century burial mounds in Kawachi and Izumi has led us to determine that Yamato expansion was based mainly on newly developed agricultural land in those two provinces. But it is clear that much of this military expansion and economic growth involved the transport of soldiers and goods through the port of Naniwa.

Just as the Yamato kings buried before about A.D. 350 at the base of Mt. Miwa were thought to have had sacred ties with kami residing on that sacred mountain, and those buried farther north between about 350 and 400 were linked with the Isonokami Shrine, the fifth-century

50 Nintoku 11/4/16, NKBT 67.392–4; Aston, 1. 82.

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kings of Kawachi and Izumi had mythological and ritual ties with the kami enshrined at Sumiyoshi, even though the secular functions of kings had become more important than their sacral functions. Like Naniwa, Sumiyoshi faces the Inland Sea and has had an "across-the-sea" character. Archaeologists have not yet found offerings made to Sumiyoshi in the middle years of the Yamato period, but connections between Ōjin and Sumiyoshi are suggested by the myth that "gold and silver lands beyond the sea" were bestowed on Ōjin by the Sumiyoshi kami while he was in his mother's womb and by the myth that Izanagi and Izanami (divine creators of the Yamato king descent line) gave birth to the Sumiyoshi kami.

Although the prosperity and expansion of fifth-century Yamato must have made members of the court's governing elite more interested in secular affairs than in kami mysteries, persons in high places were surely impelled – at those early stages of thought and belief concerning group leadership – to reinforce their authority with affirmations of belief in the kami that had a mysterious power to dispense benefits at crucial times and places. The Yamato kings of that day were constantly immersed in the task of obtaining materials, techniques, and technicians from – and establishing military and administrative control over – lands located along and beyond the Inland Sea. And for such endeavors the position and character of Sumiyoshi kami were propitious: The shrine faced the sea, and its kami, believed to have sacred ties to the Yamato king line of descent, were thought to possess a strange and marvelous power to make any overseas venture successful.

Outlying regions

Although the Yamato kings buried on the Nara plain had extended their control to a substantial portion of Japan's main islands in the previous fourth century, Ōjin and his successors of the fifth century, operating from a powerful new center along the shore of the Inland Sea, obviously exercised firmer control over more territory than did their predecessors.

In an attempt to show how control was established and maintained, Shiraishi has concentrated on archaeological evidence obtained from large mounds erected in distant Upper Kenu, an area between the cities of Maebashi and Ōta in Gumma Prefecture. Mounds thought to have been built there in the fourth century are between 120 and 130 meters long, but those constructed in the fifth century are larger, less numerous, and have the same square-in-front and round-behind style

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of those built in the provinces of Kawachi and Izumi. The three largest of these Upper Kenu mounds are (1) the Sengen-yama (in the city of Takasaki), 171 meters long and probably built at the beginning of the fifth century; (2) the Bessho Chausu-yama (in the eastern part of the Upper Kenu area), 165 meters long and erected somewhat later in that century; and (3) the Tenjin-yama (in the present city of Ōta), measuring 210 meters, the largest mound found in the whole of the Tōhoku region, which was constructed around the middle of that same century.

Shiraishi has concluded that these three mounds were not for the burial of local leaders, as the earlier and smaller mounds had been, but for successive heads of an Upper Kenu federation of clans. To him the evidence also suggests that the power of persons buried in these mounds was not based primarily on control over a particular local group but on ties with the Yamato kings. These ties are most clearly revealed in the discovery that the body buried in the last and biggest of the Upper Kenu mounds (the Tenjin-yama) had been placed in a long stone coffin that was precisely like those made then in Kawachi and Izumi, suggesting that the artisans had come from that great distance to make coffins in the Kawachi–Izumi style. And this in turn provides support for the conclusion that leaders of eastern Japan were developing increasingly close ties with the Yamato court.[51]

All the mounds erected in Upper Kenu after the middle of the fifth century, following the completion of the great Tenjin-yama mound, were smaller. Shiraishi thinks this was not due to a restoration of a fourth-century type of leadership but to the tendency for local dignitaries to become enmeshed in the Yamato control system, probably through fictive family ties with individuals standing in pivotal positions at court. Such local representatives of the central court were, however, still in firm control of the local populace, as is suggested by clay figurine (*haniwa*) representations of grand funeral processions and by the remains of grand residences (surrounded by moats) built at about the same time.[52] It is felt, however, that after the construction of the large Tenjin-yama mound, the principal source of strength for most high officials of Upper Kenu, as well as in other parts of the Kantō region, no longer came from their positions as leaders of a local petty state federation (which probably has been dismantled by then) but from their positions as local representatives of the Yamato court.

Particularly concrete and convincing evidence of such a development

51 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 178–9. 52 Ibid., pp. 179–82.

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is provided by a sword (inscribed with a date thought to be 471) found recently in the Inariyama mound, south of the Tone River in Saitama Prefecture. Grave goods accompanying the sword and the body, presumably belonging to the sword's owner, indicate that the Inariyama mound was not built for the owner of the sword but for an earlier chieftain. The sword inscription reveals that it had been possessed by the head (*kashira*) of a sword wielders' group (a *be*) that guarded the palace of the current Yamato "great king" (*ōkimi*).[53] Local military officials such as the owner of this sword were appearing in other parts of Japan as well, a conclusion reinforced by the discovery of another fifth-century inscription-bearing sword excavated from a mound in southern Japan. The inscription on this sword, taken from the Edafuna-yama burial mound near the present city of Kumamoto, has not yet been fully deciphered, but it definitely contains the two characters for *ōkimi*, indicating that its possessor, like the owner of the Inariyama sword in northeastern Japan, was a Yamato agent in the southwestern region. Thus we can be quite sure that Yamato kings like Yūryaku had extended their control to most of Japan during the fifth century.[54]

Mechanisms of control

The system that the fifth-century kings of Yamato devised for extending and maintaining their hold over more land and more people, first on the Nara plain and then beyond, can now be sketched. What we see, far more clearly, is the rise of a network of local units and offices incorporated, centuries later and after considerable change, into a sinicized *ritsuryō* legal system.

Uji and Kabane. At the base of the system were agricultural communities that had probably come into existence at the time of the introduction and spread of wet-rice agriculture, when flat and well-watered land was first developed for the cultivation of rice in paddy fields.

53 This gold-inlaid sword, found in 1978, was studied by Inoue Mitsusada, Ōno Susumu, et al., *Shimpojium tekken no nazo to kodai Nihon* (Tokyo: Shinchō, 1978); and its 115-character inscription was translated (omitting the names of the owner's ancestors) in *An Introductory Bibliography for Japanese Studies*, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1. Although many problems raised by the inscription have not been resolved, it still is an extremely valuable source. It contains (1) the oldest known Japanese genealogical record, (2) characters for "great king" (*ōkimi*) preceded by a name identified as that of Yūryaku, (3) the name of a warrior group thought to have been a *be*, and (4) a *kabane* title. It has become a basic reference for the study of many important developments in the fifth century. See Kamata, "Ōken to be-min sei," pp. 249–52. See also Saitama-ken kyōiku iinkai, *Saitama Inariyama kofun shingai mei tetsu ken shūri hōkokusho* (Urawa: Saitama-ken kyōiku iinkai, 1982).

54 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 18, 32–33.

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Archaeological studies indicate that such communities, surrounded by ditches and walls, were usually located on ground too high for the cultivation of rice but near paddy fields. From earliest times, similar concerns and interests bound members of such farming communities into tight social groups that, from their position at the base of Japanese society, shaped and colored subsequent social change. Farmers have always had to deal with the common task of leveling land, building and maintaining dikes and canals, keeping the fields flooded during the growing season, and coping with the dangers of drought and storm as well as the possibility of attacks by wild animals or aggressive neighbors. And it was in such farming communities that lineal control groups (called *uji* or clans) gradually emerged to become major units in the Yamato control structure.

Everyone in an early community was apparently convinced that if rice were planted at a propitious time, if rain were plentiful during the growing season, and if protection against wild animals and human enemies were adequate, the community's protective deity (kami) had been exercising its mysterious power benevolently. Because the people believed, both then and later, that they would receive divine assistance only if offerings were made and festivals were held at the right time and in the right place and manner, they paid close attention (especially at crucial times of the year) to establishing and maintaining good relations with the community's kami. Indeed, the principal functions of a community head (at first selected ritually) was to perform rites that honored and ensured the receipt of benefits from the community's kami.

Third-century Chinese accounts and archaeological finds show that around the middle years of the earlier Yayoi period (at about the time of Christ), agricultural communities of a given region were brought together into petty "states" or "small state federations," the second stage of centralization. By the first century A.D. some of these petty states on the southern island of Kyushu were strong enough to send missions to the Chinese court. Although we have no detailed information about the unification process or how it affected the life and organization of either the nuclear community or the umbrella federation, the following conclusions – relevant to the nature and role of the clans that became the foundation of the Yamato control structure – can be drawn: (1) A small state was formed by one agricultural community that gained supremacy (probably by means of military force) over neighboring communities; (2) a small state was headed by a king or queen who stood above (but apparently did not replace) the heads of

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constituent communities; (3) a king or queen had a sacred relationship to, and was the chief priest or priestess in the worship of, his or her guardian kami, just as the head of each constituent community conducted the worship of its community kami; (4) a state kami stood above (but did not replace) the kami worshiped by the heads of petty states; (5) a king or queen was often succeeded by a son or daughter; and (6) the centralization process was associated with, if not accelerated by, an increasingly widespread use of iron tools and weapons.

Clans of the fifth-century Yamato system, as well as its chieftain and kami, developed and functioned somewhat like groups formed at the earlier (second) stage of centralization, but with differences arising from their special relations to the growth and development of Yamato. The groups formed at this later stage – possibly called *uji* by a Yamato king – were probably located in and around the Nara plain. They are thought to have retained much of the social character of early Yayoi agricultural communities and of petty states or state-federations that had begun to emerge in Kyushu toward the middle of the Yayoi period, but they were transformed into *uji*-like lineal groups by familial, religious, economic, and military ties with the Yamato kings. As the Yamato kingdom gained more wealth and power, such groups, again fundamentally altered by the functions they performed as parts of the Yamato control system, appeared in regions outside the Nara plain.[55]

The *Nihon shoki* carries many references to clans in its chapters on the reigns of Yamato's first kings, but such lineal groups probably did not become strong instruments of regional control until around the time of King Yūryaku in the fifth century. Words included in two fifth-century inscriptions supply unmistakable evidence that the *uji* had become basic units in the Yamato system. The first is on a bronze mirror bearing a date identified as 443, a mirror possessed by the Suda Hachiman Shrine in Wakayama Prefecture. The forty-eight Chinese characters inscribed on it include the name and title of Kawachi no Atai. Kawachi is thought to be the name of a clan, and Atai the *kabane* title bestowed on its head by a Yamato king. The second fifth-century

55 Deductions regarding clan roots are based on a consideration of (1) Tsude's conclusions in "Nōkō shakai no keisei," pp. 117–58, concerning the nature of agricultural life in the Yayoi period; (2) Harada Toshiaki's studies, *Nihon kodai shūkyō: zōho kaitei han* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1970); and *Nihon kodai shūkyō* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1971) of religion and society in ancient times; (3) Inoue Mitsusada's ideas in *Asuka no chōtei*, vol. 3 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1974), pp. 22–36, on the early development of clan and *Kabane;* and (4) Kadowaki Teiji's studies, "Kodai shakai ron," *Kodai*, vol. 2 of *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 332–77, of the social side of the centralization process. Kiley surveyed postwar studies of the nature and development of clans and *kabane* in his "State and Dynasty," pp. 27–31.

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inscription, also including the name of a clan and the *kabane* held by its head, is on the aforementioned Inariyama sword. There we read that the owner, whose ancestors had served King Yūryaku and his predecessors generation after generation, was Owake no Omi. The word *uji* (clan) does not appear in the inscription, but historians conclude that Owake was a clan name and that Omi was the *kabane* bestowed on an Owake head by a Yamato king.[56]

The discovery of these two fifth-century inscriptions bearing the names of clans and *kabane* add credibility to clan references in the *Nihon shoki*. Recent historical studies suggest, moreover, that all chronicle items for the year after 400 are more accurate than had long been supposed. Apart from the observation that post-400 reports contain more detail about human events (suggesting that the compilers had access to written sources later lost), comparisons with contemporary Chinese and Korean historical accounts show that a number of passages in the *Nihon shoki* were copied from or based on such foreign sources as the Chinese dynastic histories of Wei and Southern Sung and on chronicles of Paekche.[57] The *Nihon shoki*'s names and dates for fifth-century kings are also in rough accord with those included Southern Sung reports on ten tributary missions that Yamato sent to the Sung court.[58]

Thus the *Nihon shoki*'s references to clans are now used with greater confidence to determine which clan had the greatest economic and political importance and also to chart relationships between the clans and the Yamato king's court. From such evidence we see that the highest *kabane* titles were awarded to men who headed powerful and strategically located clans and who were bound to one Yamato king after another by real or fictive family ties. The most prestigious *kabane* were bestowed as a hereditary right on clan leaders at the court, with the lowest going to clan leaders in local areas. The highest two (*omi* and *muraji*) were granted only to the heads of powerful clans who served the Yamato kings directly and who resided in the neighborhood of the capital. The head of the strongest was called a great *omi* or great *muraji*. Historians who have studied the Yamato phase of Japan's centralization process have therefore given special attention to the appearance of clans whose heads held the title of great *omi*, appointments sometimes linked with shifts in the Yamato king line of descent.

By examining references to *kabane* during the Yūryaku reign, Inoue Mitsusada concluded that Yūryaku greatly expanded the use of *kabane*

56 Ueda, *Ōkimi no seiki*, pp. 32, 289, 372; Kamata, "Ōken to be-min sei," pp. 249–52.
57 Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon shoki* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1983), p. 138.
58 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 204; Kiley, "State and Dynasty," pp. 31–40.

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appointments in order to strengthen his control and that his reign was marked by the emergence of a new clan alignment. Some heads were then receiving the grand title of great *omi* or great *muraji*. The Katsuragi was no longer dominant at court, having been replaced by the Heguri, Ōtomo, and Mononobe clans, which were valued for their military strength and loyalty and whose heads were awarded the highest *kabane*. Clan heads in outlying regions also came to hold *kabane* during those years (as revealed in the inscriptions on the two fifth-century swords mentioned earlier), indicating that their clans had been incorporated into the Yamato system. Such developments at this time had a political significance comparable to the rise of the Soga to a position of dominance at the end of the following century.[59]

Having obtained a somewhat clearer picture of how clans and *kabane* figured in the rapid increase of Yamato control after the middle of the fifth century, historians can now understand why King Ingyō (Yūryaku's father) ordered (according to both the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*) persons who claimed they were *kabane*-holding heads of clans to subject themselves to an ordeal (*kugatachi*). The *Nihon shoki* reports that Ingyō issued the following decree in the third year of his reign:

> In ancient times good governance consisted of people acquiring [proper] positions and avoiding clan or *kabane* irregularities. But during the three years of my reign, there has been [incessant] conflict between inferiors and superiors, and the people have no peace. In some cases persons have mistakenly lost their *kabane* and in others purposely [and fraudulently] laid claim to a high clan position. Probably this is why we have not had good governance. Although I lack wisdom, I must do something to rectify these irregularities.

The *Nihon shoki* goes on to report that Ingyō issued another decree after obtaining advice from his ministers:

> Nobles and bureaucrats [at the capital] and such officials as provincial governors (Kuni no Miyatsuko) have been claiming that they are descendants of a great ruler (Mikado) and have sacred origins. But ever since the appearance of heaven, earth, and man, tens of thousands of years have elapsed and various clans and thousands of *kabane* have appeared, making it difficult to know whose clan and *kabane* claims are authentic. Consequently, I hereby order that all clan heads and all *kabane* holders first purify themselves and then subject themselves to a *kugatachi* ordeal [in order to determine whose claims are true and whose are false].

Then, according to the *Nihon shoki*, a vat of boiling water was placed on a certain hill, and all who claimed that they were clan heads or held

59 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 22–36.

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kabane titles were assembled and ordered to put their hands in the boiling water, having been assured that if their claims were true their hands would not be burned. The *Nihon shoki*'s report ends with the comment that many persons with false claims fled from the scene in terror and that thereafter no one was inclined to claim falsely that he was head of a particular clan or held a particular *kabane*.[60] This account demonstrates that the Yamato kings of the fifth century did indeed consider *kabane*-holding clan chieftains to be crucial instruments of Yamato control in regions beyond the Nara plain.

Be and kabane. Although large clans or lineage groups (*uji*) headed by hereditary chieftains who held the highest *kabane* titles awarded by a Yamato king were central to the expansion of Yamato authority, much of Yamato's military and economic power was generated by occupational groups (*be*) attached to the court or to its supporting clans. These groups were similar in some respects to clans. Both resided in clearly defined areas and were ruled by hereditary heads holding *kabane* that had been granted by a Yamato king. But unlike a clan – which was higher up in the control structure and whose hereditary leader had long ruled (and served as chief priest for) the residents of that particular area – a *be*'s head controlled the activities of a group engaged in performing a crucial service or in making a needed product for the court or one of its clans.

Recent historical and archaeological research by Kamada Motokazu and others permits us to conclude that as early as the first years of the fifth century, small and medium-sized occupational groups located in and around Kawachi (called *tomo* and having hereditary heads) had such special duties as guarding the palace, supplying water for the court, and carrying out custodial chores. But with the expansion of Yamato, the *tomo* spread to areas beyond the Nara plain and came to be headed by officials designated as occupational group managers (*tomo no miyatsuko*). Such groups seem also to have been called *be,* a word probably introduced from Korea. In January 1984 an important archaeological report on an iron sword found at Okadayama and bearing the three characters for "Nukata *be*" was published. Unfortunately, what is left of the inscription contains no date, but an analysis of pottery found at the site from which the sword was taken indicates that it was made late in the sixth century. The Nukata *be* has been linked with the Nukata *koshiro* which, according to the *Nihon shoki,*

60 Ingyō 4/9/9 and 4/9/28, NKBT 67.437–8; Aston, 1.316–17.

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was established during the Ōjin reign. Moreover, the *Izumo fudoki* refers to a Nukatabe no Omi, and other eighth-century records show that Izumo then had a district named Nukata. Thus the Okadayama sword inscription, together with fifth-century inscriptions found on the Suda Hachiman mirror and the Inariyama sword, permit historians to conclude confidently that a fairly extensive and complex occupational-group system had evolved by the closing years of the fifth century.[61]

Nashiro and *koshiro*, special types of *be*, are frequently mentioned in chronicle reports of Yamato kings who ruled in the fifth century. The former was a special occupational group bestowed on a queen, and the latter, on a royal heir. The Ingyō chapter of the *Nihon shoki* refers to a number of each, suggesting that they had been established in widely scattered regions of the country by the middle of that century. But because of skepticism about the validity of evidence found in chronicles compiled at a much later date, historians have not been willing until recently to state that *nashiro* or *koshiro* existed as early as Ingyō's day. This skepticism was largely removed, however, by a recent discovery of fragments of household registers for the year 721, which contain 618 names of individuals associated with the Anaho *be*, a *koshiro* type of occupational group created by Ingyō and bestowed on his son who reigned (after about 453) from the Anaho palace as King Ankō.[62]

Early occupational groups were originally established to assist the court in the conduct of kami ceremonies and to provide personal services. But with the expansion of the Yamato kings' power in the fifth century and the spread of occupational groups from the court to clans in outlying regions, an increasingly large number of these groups (gradually coming to be referred to as *be*) served the court or a clan by producing such valued articles as iron swords and bronze mirrors or by performing technical tasks associated with the construction of huge burial mounds and complex irrigation systems. Concurrent technological revolutions in warfare and agriculture, both arising from an expanded use of advanced techniques introduced from abroad, greatly augmented the demand for a great variety and volume of goods and services, which these occupational groups provided. Against the backdrop of such technological and sociological change, then, we see new significance in *kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* references to the increased activity of numerous occupational groups (*be*) made up of Paekche immigrants. *Be* of this type also bore names that refer to their specialized

61 Kamata, "Ōken to be-min sei," pp. 252–8. 62 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, p. 31.

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occupations: working in iron, raising horses, making shields, and the like. The power and prestige of the Yamato leaders, and clan heads all over the country, were based on the number and strength of the *be* that they possessed.

Indeed, these occupational groups had become so important that many clan names came to include the word *be*, as did several clans that enjoyed special influence at court during and after the reign of Yūryaku, such as the Mononobe and the Inbe. But the importance of a strong occupational group to a powerful clan is probably most clearly seen in the support that the *yugei* (quiver bearers) gave the Ōtomo, a clan noted for its military might and influence at the Yūryaku court.

Foreign expansion

The expansion of the Yamato within the Japanese islands during the middle years of this period was intertwined with its political and military involvement in Korean affairs. The roots of this involvement run back at least to the fourth century, as is suggested by characters inscribed on the seven-pronged sword forged in Paekche during the year 369. But recent studies of relations among northeast Asian kingdoms reveal the development of an entirely new situation at the beginning of the fifth century, a situation that Yamato may well have seen as threatening, or as offering opportunities for further expansion.[63]

Until the middle of the fourth century, Koguryŏ was the strongest of the three Korean kingdoms, even considering people in the other two (Paekche and Silla) to be its subjects. But then, and as we have noted, Koguryŏ became embroiled in bitter battles with the Paekche kingdom to the south. Approximately two years after Paekche had presented the seven-pronged sword to the Yamato king in 369, Paekche soldiers (according to the *Samguk sagi*) actually invaded the Koguryŏ capital, thereby placing in jeopardy Koguryŏ's existence as an independent kingdom.[64] But by the last decade of the century, Koguryŏ had made a spectacular recovery, achieving enough military strength to repel Japanese invaders in 391, to win battles against Paekche in 394, and even to undertake aggressive action in north China during 395. Faced with this comeback by Koguryŏ, Paekche leaders turned to

63 Sakamoto Yoshitane, *Wa no Goō: Kūhaku no geseiki* (Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1984), pp. 11–32.

64 Kawanishi Hiroyuki suggested that even in these early years Paekche had requested military assistance and that Yamato had supplied it: "Zenki Kinai seiken ron", *Shirin* 64 and 65 (September 1981); Suzuki, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei," p. 201. The *Samguk sagi* has been translated into Japanese by Inoue Hideo in his *Sangoku shiki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1980).

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Yamato for military support, even sending its crown prince to Yamato as a hostage in 397 – just as Silla had dispatched a princely hostage to Koguryŏ in 392 when that kingdom was in dire need of military support. So at the turn of the fifth century, right after Yamato had sent an army against Silla, the Korean situation was marked by a deep and lasting antagonism between two kingdom combinations: Koguryŏ and Silla pitted against Paekche and Yamato.

Koguryŏ and Silla were closely associated with, and frequently sent tributary missions to, the courts of north China, and Paekche and Yamato allied themselves with courts of south China. After Paekche began striking out against Koguryŏ in the 370s, Koguryŏ sent tribute to the northern court of the Former Tsou; and at about the same time Paekche dispatched a tributary mission to the southern court of Eastern Chin. The invasion of Silla by Yamato at the turn of the fifth century served to harden the lines that separated these two northeast Asian tributary-kingdom systems by increasing (1) Silla's dependence on Koguryŏ (in 402 Koguryŏ engineered the enthronement of a new Silla king), (2) Paekche's dependence on Yamato (in 405 Yamato had the crown prince, who had been sent to Yamato as a hostage, enthroned as the king of Paekche), (3) Koguryŏ's influence in northeast Asian affairs (in 413 the great King Kwanggaet'o even sent a tributary mission to the Eastern Chin court of south China), and (4) Yamato's interest in establishing closer relations with the Southern Sung court of China (the Southern Sung history reports that ten tributary missions arrived from Yamato between 421 and 478).

Although the *Nihon shoki* does not mention any of the ten missions dispatched to the Chinese court of Southern Sung, considerable information is included in the official *Sung shu* history. The ten were reportedly sent by five Yamato kings. But it has been difficult to identify these five because the compilers of the Southern Sung history used only one Chinese character to name a king. Finally, and after much disagreement and meticulous research, scholars now generally agree that the first three missions (in 421, 425, and 430) were dispatched by either Ōjin or Richū, the fourth (438) by Hanzei, the next three (443, 451, and 460) by Ingyō, the eighth (462) by Ankō, and the last two (477 and 478) by Yūryaku. Suzuki Yasutami believes that the dispatch of Yamato's first mission to Southern Sung may have been recommended by Paekche leaders who felt threatened by close ties between its two strongest neighbors: Koguryŏ and Silla.[65] But between 429

65 Suzuki, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei," p. 204; and Kiley, "State and Dynasty," pp. 37–40.

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(when the Paekche court was torn by rivalry between pro-Yamato and pro-Silla factions) and 455 (when war again broke out between Koguryŏ and Paekche), Paekche was not seriously threatened by a strong Koguryŏ–Silla alliance and apparently made no appeals to Yamato for military assistance, although Yamato sent three missions to Southern Sung during these relatively quiet decades.

Soon after the outbreak of war with Koguryŏ in 455, Paekche returned to the practice of asking Yamato for military reinforcement. In 461 the king sent his own mother to Japan as a hostage, a sure sign that his situation had indeed become desperate. According to the memorial that Yūryaku dispatched to the emperor of Southern Sung in 478, Yamato had been planning for some years to help Paekche by attacking Koguryŏ, possibly ever since the outbreak of war between Paekche and Koguryŏ in 455. Suzuki even suggests that such a plan may have been mentioned in the Ankō memorial to the Southern Sung in 462.[66] But as powerful as Yamato had become, apparently no sizable military units were sent to Paekche in these years of disturbed relations among Korea's three strong kingdoms.

But Koguryŏ invaded Paekche in 475, defeating its troops and killing its king. According to the *Nihon shoki*, the Koguryŏ king rejected a proposal to have Paekche destroyed, because "we have heard that Paekche has long been a royal estate of Japan and, as is well known by neighboring states, its king serves the Japanese emperor."[67] It is doubtful that the Koguryŏ sovereign ever made such a statement, but we can be sure – on the basis of what the Southern Sung account says about the two missions received from Japan in 477 and 478 – that the Yamato court was determined to do something about the defeat of Paekche and the aggressiveness of Koguryŏ. This is most clearly revealed in the memorial that Yūryaku sent to the Sung court in 478:

> Our land is remote, far across the ocean. From times of old, our ancestors have clad themselves in armor and helmet, crossed the hills and waters, and spared no time for rest. They conquered fifty-five kingdoms of hairy men to the east and sixty-six barbarian kingdoms to the west. Crossing the sea to the north, they subjugated ninety-five kingdoms. The way to govern is to maintain harmony and peace, thereby establishing order. Generation after generation our ancestors have paid homage to your court. Your subject, ignorant though he may be, has succeeded to the throne and is fervently devoted to Your Sovereign Majesty. Everything he has is at Your Majesty's disposal. In order to [send this mission] by way of Paekche, we have prepared ships and boats. But Koguryŏ has defied law and schemed to capture them. Moreover,

66 Suzuki, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei," p. 207.
67 Yūryaku 20 (476) /winter, NKBT 67.496–7; Aston, 1.368–9.

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Koguryŏ has made border raids and committed murder repeatedly. So we have been forced to delay our mission and missed favorable winds. Whenever we pressed on [with plans to dispatch a tributary mission], Koguryŏ became rebellious. My deceased father (Ingyō) became indignant with this marauding foe that had blocked our route to Your Majesty's court and, motivated by a sense of justice, mobilized a million archers in preparing to launch a great campaign [against Koguryŏ]. But before plans for the campaign could be fully developed and implemented, my father and brother (Ankō) died, and during the period of mourning a cessation of military activity was required. But inaction does not produce victory. So we are again making preparations for carrying out the wishes of my predecessors. The troops are in high spirits; civil and military officials are prepared for action; and no one is afraid to fight. Your Sovereign virtue extends over heaven and earth. If we can crush this [Koguryŏ] foe and put an end to our troubles, we will continue to be loyal [subjects]. I therefore implore Your Majesty to appoint me supreme commander of the expedition, give me the status of minister, and award persons under me with [appropriate] ranks and titles. Thus will we be encouraged to remain loyal.[68]

Yūryaku did not obtain everything he requested: The Sung account reports that he received only titles and offices that had been awarded to his predecessors: "King of Yamato, and Pacifying General of the East who is in Charge of the Military Affairs of Six Kingdoms (Yamato, Silla, Mimana, Kaya, Chinhan, and Mahan)." The Yamato section of the Southern Sung history indicates that Yūryaku asked not only for an appointment as supreme commander of the expedition against Koguryŏ but also for one that would put him in charge of Paekche. But neither request was granted.

Yūryaku was undoubtedly disappointed by the Chinese emperor's response but was not deterred, when hearing of the death of the current Paekche king in the summer of 479, from having a Paekche royal prince – apparently a son or grandson of the queen mother who had been sent to Yamato as a hostage in 461 – placed on the Paekche throne.[69] Yūryaku might also have tried to implement his grand scheme for sending a military expedition against Koguryŏ if he had not become ill in 479, dying shortly afterward. While on his deathbed his court became divided over the question of who should succeed him. And his successors, judging from what we read in the *Nihon*

68 *Sung shu* 97:23b–25a, trans. Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories: Later Han Through Ming Dynasties* (South Pasadena, Calif.: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), pp. 23–24 (with minor editorial changes).

69 *Nihon shoki*, Yūryaku 23/4, NKBT 67.497–8; Aston, 1.368–9. Hirano Kunio studied Yamato–Korean relations during the fifth century in "Yamato ōken to Chōsen," in *Genshi oyobi kodai*, vol. 1 of Asao Naohiro, Ishii Susumu, Inouye Mitsusada, Ôishi Kaichirō et al., eds., *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 227–72.

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shoki, were more preoccupied with internal conflict than with proposals for dispatching another expedition to Korea. The expansive fifth century came to a close, then, at a rather quiet time in Yamato relations with Korean kingdoms, at a time when Yamato was ruled by King Buretsu, who was denounced in the *Nihon shoki* for accomplishing nothing and never missing a chance to "personally witness cruel punishments of all kinds."[70]

Fifth-century archaeological discoveries demonstrate that expansion into Korea was motivated not simply by an urge to extend control over foreign territory but, rather, by a hunger for material and technological gain. Myths concerning Jingū's victorious military expedition against Silla – probably based on foreign campaigns organized early in the fifth century – refer to Silla as a "land of treasure," as a country yielding "precious treasure," "maps and registers," "gold and silver," and "figured gauzes and silks," and as a kingdom that periodically sends "eighty ships of tribute."[71] The results of studies by Kitō Kiyoaki support the theory that explosive developments in the use of iron weapons and tools had created a vast and growing demand for iron ore, for which Korea seems to have been the principal source. But there was also a continuing demand for showy treasures such as bronze mirrors, swords, and bells. We do not have enough information to know precisely how many of these materials were brought into Japan by a particular channel, but it is assumed that even though large amounts were received as gifts when sending or receiving official missions (sometimes linked with the use or display of military might), as much or more flowed in as articles of trade or loot. Demands for the services of individuals familiar with building and administrative techniques might even have been greater than those for exotic treasures. Immigrant technicians – whether military, agricultural, or administrative – may have arrived as gifts or tribute from Korean kingdoms. But many were undoubtedly prisoners of war subjected to different degrees of servitude, or immigrants who may not have migrated voluntarily.[72]

YAMATO DISRUPTION

The Yamato kings had become extremely rich and powerful during the fifth century, extending their influence to areas as far away as southern Korea, but in the sixth century they were plagued by setbacks overseas and disunity at home. Instead of being known, as Nintoku and

70 Buretsu, Introduction, NKBT 68.8; Aston, 1.399.
71 *Nihon shoki*, Jingū, NKBT 67.330–42; Aston, 1.224–35.
72 Suzuki, "Ajia shominzoku no kokka keisei," p. 208.

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Yūryaku had been, for victorious campaigns in distant places and the completion of ambitous building projects, Keitai and Kimmei, the most prominent of the sixth-century kings, are noted for their military failures in Korea, challenges to their authority in the provinces, and the roles they played in bitter succession disputes at court. This notwithstanding developments such as the following prepared Japan for reform in the seventh century: the growth of power centers outside the Nara plain, further improvement in Yamato's control system, the spread of higher forms of Chinese culture, and appointments to high office of able leaders who were familiar with Chinese technology and learning. Each is a significant aspect of the sixth-century prelude to the Asuka enlightenment that began around the time of Empress Suiko's enthronement in 593.

End of the glorious fifth century

Until recently, historians have tended to think of Keitai's enthronement in 507 as marking the end of Yamato's glorious fifth century, a view based in part on the commonly accepted reputation of Keitai's predecessor (Buretsu) as "an incomparable bad ruler."[73] Moreover, the chronicles state that Buretsu died without having named a successor, leading the kingdom's ministers to back a fifth-generation descendant who resided somewhere beyond the Nara plain. Such statements about the selection of Keitai suggest a break in the line of royal descent, as well as a new locus of power. But it is now felt that the line was not actually broken then because Keitai's father came from the Wakanoke clan, as had Yamato kings since the reign of Ingyō early in the fifth century. It had long been the custom, when resolving a question of succession, to assign special weight to the clan connections of a candidate's mother. A clan enjoying the signal honor of having one female member after another give birth to one king after another was referred to as a *gaiseki* (in-law) clan. But it was back in Ingyō's time, not with Keitai, and Wakanoke replaced Katsuragi as the *gaiseki* clan. Moreover, no evidence has been found to support the view that with the reign of Keitai, the court's power center moved to a new location. It seems, then, that the enthronement of Keitai was accompanied by neither a sharp break in the line of royal descent nor a new alignment of power at court.[74]

73 *Gukanshō*, chap. 3, NKBT 86.134; Delmer M. Brown and Ichirō Ishida, trans., *The Future and the Past: A Translation and Study of the Gukanshō, an Interpretative History of Japan Written in 1219* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 24.

74 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 68–77.

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But serious trouble did arise a few years later, largely as a result of the rapid growth of two Korean kingdoms (Paekche and Silla) that were expanding southward toward an area (Mimana) where Yamato had long exercised considerable influence. The first recorded sign of danger came in 512 when an envoy from Paekche arrived at the Yamato court with an official request that four districts of Mimana (K: Kaya) be recognized as parts of Paekche. After a long debate about how to respond, the Yamato court finally decided to yield. The *Nihon shoki* suggests that several officials had serious misgivings about this decision and claimed that the two men who favored compliance had been bribed.[75] But the same conciliatory stance was taken the following year when Paekche asked that still another district be recognized as its territory. On that occasion the Yamato court even sent troops to force Mimana to accept Paekche suzerainty. Such consistent support of Paekche – even handing over territory – may well have been motivated by a realistic appraisal of Paekche's military strength, but another factor was surely uneasiness over Silla's expansion in the direction of Mimana.[76]

Yamato's position in southern Korea continued to deteriorate, and in 527 the court decided to send a military force of sixty thousand troops to recapture areas that had been conquered by Silla. But because the troops had to be diverted to Kyushu for quelling a rebellion, they did not reach Korea until two years later. By that time the situation in Mimana had worsened. After his arrival, the Japanese commander (Kenu no Omi) invited the kings of Paekche and Silla to join him in a conference, but neither accepted the invitation, instead merely sending representatives. A high-ranking Silla officer eventually did arrive with three thousand soldiers but then proceeded to plunder four villages in the Mimana area. After Kenu no Omi had failed, month after month, to obtain cooperation from either Paekche or Silla, discontent welled up even among the Mimana people. Finally, in 529 a Mimana king asked the Yamato court to recall its commander. On his way back to Japan, Kenu no Omi became sick and died, and a few months after Keitai's death (probably in 531), the Mimana kingdom was incorporated into Silla.[77] This development, and not the circumstances of Keitai's enthronement, marks the end of Yamato's glorious fifth century.

75 Keitai 6/12, NKBT 68.28–30; Aston, 2. 8–9.
76 Keitai 7, NKBT 68.28–30; Aston, 1. 12–13; Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp 82–83.
77 *Nihon shoki* Keitai 21 to 25, NKBT 68.43–47; Aston, 1. 15–25. See Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 101–2, and Lee, *A New History of Korea*, pp. 41–44.

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A new power base

Before turning to the troubles faced by the court in such outlying regions as Kyushu and the Kantō, we should note Yamato's new power base. Following earlier moves from Shiki to Saki around the year 350 and from Saki to Kawachi–Izumi in roughly 400, this move was made some time during the sixth-century reign of Keitai, probably during his troubled last years. Keitai's palace and burial mound, as well as those of his successors, were erected in the southwestern corner of the Nara plain, at the foot of Mt. Miwa where the Yamato court had been located during the first century of the Yamato period.

Archaeologists have amassed large amounts of data from sixth-century finds in that part of the Nara plain, but many interpretative uncertainties remain. No one seems to be sure which Yamato king was buried in which mound, and no general agreement has been reached on the question of why the palaces and mounds were shifted to this new location. Some historians have suggested that court officials were afraid that Naniwa and its environs were too vulnerable to attack from the sea and that military defeats in Korea would be followed by an invasion from Silla. But it is more likely that the court was subjected to pressure from such strong clans as the Soga who, as increasingly powerful supporters of Yamato rulers, undoubtedly insisted that the court be located near their particular power bases.[78]

Inoue Mitsusada drew a map of the area between Naniwa and Mt. Miwa showing that the new center was strategically located. Keitai's Iware palace and burial mound, as well as those of his immediate successors, were near the town of Yagi where Yamato's main east–west road crossed its main north–south one. The former linked Yagi to the western provinces of Izumi and Kawachi and to the port of Naniwa beyond, whereas the latter connected it with the northern part of Yamato and the northern provinces of Yamashiro and Ōmi (see Map 2.2). In addition to enjoying the benefits of overland contact with neighboring provinces, Yagi had other advantages. It was on the Asuka River (a part of the Yamato River system that flowed by Naniwa into the Inland Sea); it was in the section of the Nara plain (at the foot of Mt. Miwa) where the Yamato kings had reigned for the first century or more of Yamato history; and it was near Soga territory.[79]

Archaeologists generally agree that the burial mounds of the last third of the Yamato period (roughly the sixth century) differed from

78 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," p. 177. 79 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, p. 117.

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Map 2.2 Last Yamato base. (Based on *Nihon rekishi chizu*, 1986, Map 8.)

those of earlier centuries: They were smaller, more numerous, and built in clusters all over the country. And yet the Mise Maru-yama mound – thought to have been for the burial of King Senka or his younger brother Kimmei, who is thought to have died in 570 – is the sixth-largest burial mound ever built in Japan. Around the middle of the eighteenth century it was opened up and, according to reports, proved to have the longest burial chamber on record, measuring twenty meters long. Later mounds, smaller and more numerous, were built in clusters throughout Japan's main islands, and Shiraishi feels that this was because (1) the power and authority of a Yamato king were no longer sharply differentiated from that of royal officials stationed throughout the country, (2) the authority of old clan-federation heads was in decline, and (3) the new type of clans (which had immigrant connections that provided services to the court of a more technical sort and which held such high offices as occupation group manager) was becoming stronger.[80]

80 Shiraishi, "Nihon kofun bunka ron," pp. 176–7; Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 118–20.

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Rebellion in Kyushu

Of the problems faced by the Yamato court before and after its base was moved back to the southwestern corner of the Nara plain, those associated with the refusal of a clan leader of northern Kyushu (a man by the name of Iwai who was governor of Tsukushi Province) to comply with court orders to provide troops and supplies for an expedition against Silla were particularly serious. The *Nihon shoki* states, with some bitterness, that Iwai had accepted bribes from Silla and had actually obstructed the mobilization of troops. Consequently, the army assembled for the Korean campaign had to be diverted for action against Iwai.[81] Within a few months Iwai was defeated and killed, but court leaders were undoubtedly afraid that such rebelliousness might develop elsewhere. Because the steps taken in Kyushu, after the Iwai defeat, were taken in other regions and altered the form and functions of institutions subsequently incorporated into the Chinese legal (*ritsuryō*) system, let us look more closely at the Kyushu situation.

The island of Kyushu has three zones, each bordered by mountains and seas and having its own speciāl relationship to the continent and central Japan (see Map 2.3). The northern zone, facing the Genkai Sea and separated from the middle zone to the southeast by the Tsukushi Mountains, was dominated by the Munakata clan. As noted earlier, the kami of Munakata were enshrined on an offshore sacred island (the "kami body") where archaeologists have discovered offerings that disclose early and continuing relations with Korea. But the Munakata clan was also allied with the Yamato court, as is indicated by early myths (recorded in both the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*) which affirm familial ties between the ancestral kami of Munakata and the ancestral kami (the Sun Goddess) of the Yamato kings.

On the southern side of Kyushu is another zone which, facing the Pacific Ocean, is cut off from the central zone by the Kyushu Mountains. This is the isolated and agriculturally deficient area occupied in ancient times by the Kumaso and Hayato peoples. The central zone, lying between the Tsukushi and Kyushu mountain ranges that cross Kyushu and separate the three zones, has three fertile plains. At its southwesterly end are the Tsukushi and Kumamoto plains, and at its opposite end, northeast of the famous Mt. Aso, is the Ōita plain.[82] There were unusual changes and developments in this central zone

81 Keitai 21/6/3 to 21/8/1, NKBT 68.34–36; Aston, 1.17–18; Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 93–102.

82 Toshio Noh and John C. Kimura, eds., *Japan: A Regional Geography of an Island Nation* (Tokyo: Teikoku shoin, 1983), pp. 29–46.

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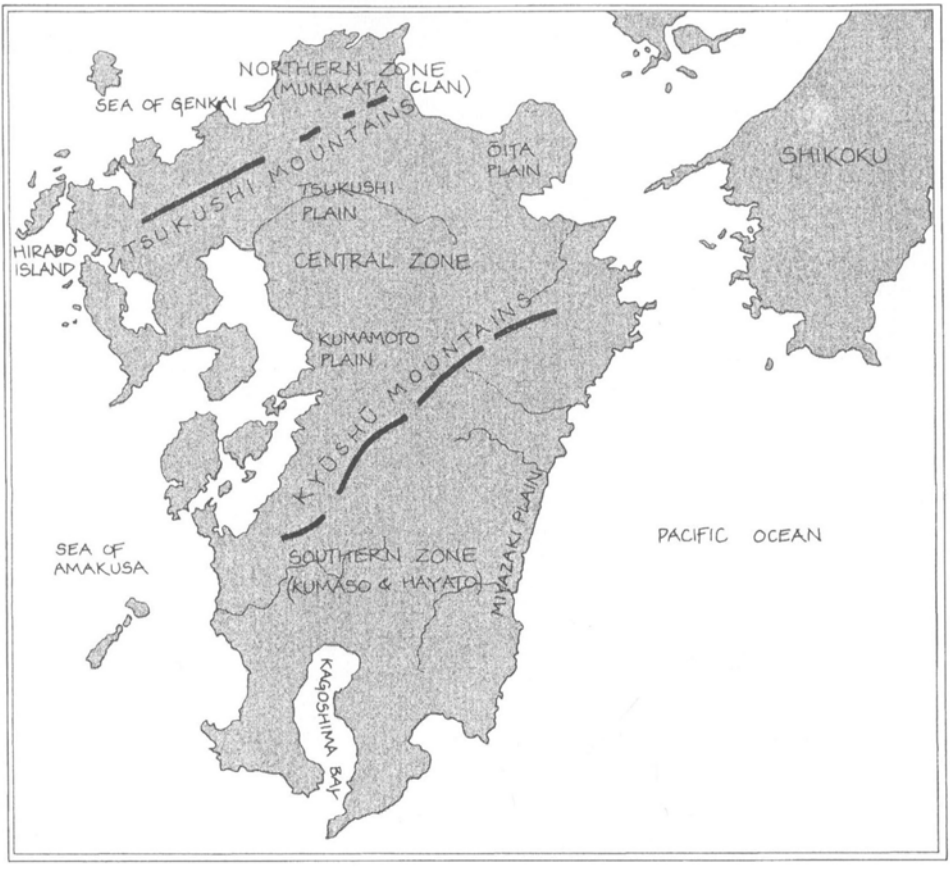

Map 2.3 Kyushu plains. (Based on Toshio Noh and John C. Kimura, eds., *Japan: A Regional Geography of an Island Nation*, p. 30.)

throughout the Yamato period. And it was on its Tsukushi plain that Iwai accumulated the power that enabled him to disregard the commands of King Keitai. His clan must have made that somewhat elevated land of this well-watered plain more productive by constructing irrigation systems of the type that had brought rapid economic growth to Kawachi during the previous century.

Until recently, Iwai's refusal to cooperate with the Yamato court's military expedition against Silla in 527 has been largely discredited as a myth. But archaeological investigations reveal that such a man actually did live in Tsukushi at that time and that he undoubtedly had gained enough independent strength to disregard orders from the Yamato

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court. Before considering the results of these investigations, let us look at what was written about Iwai in the *Chikugo fudoki*, a gazetteer compiled in the eighth century and quoted in the *Shaku Nihongi*. He was buried, according to this source, in a mound located over two miles south of Kamitsu Yame no Agata (inside the present city of Yame in Fukuoka Prefecture), a mound that was about 21 meters high, 180 meters from east to west, and 120 meters from north to south. The *Chikugo fudoki* also tells us that sixty stone carvings of men and shields had been placed on each side of the Iwai burial and that a kind of shrine (*gatō*), with a stone human figure inside, was built at its northeast corner. Three stone horses, three stone palaces, and three stone storehouses were reportedly erected in front of the *gatō*. The gazetteer also includes an old man's story about Iwai, picturing him as a strong and cruel man who had built a huge mound for his own burial. The story ends with details of Iwai's disgraceful flight from the battlefield at the time of defeat by Yamato troops and of the Yamato soldiers' becoming so angered by their failure to find him that in frustration, they knocked off the heads of the mound's stone horses.[83]

On the northern side of the present city of Yame, atop a low east–west hill called the Stone Man Mountain, archaeologists have found and investigated several ancient mounds. One measures 176 meters long, 110 meters wide at its round rear, and 130 meters wide at its square front. This mound not only is near where the *Chikugo fudoki* says that Iwai's mound was built, but it also has roughly the same measurements. Moreover, it is the largest burial mound ever found in north Kyushu and the third largest in the whole of Kyushu. It has a 40-meter square extension on its northeast corner, precisely where the gazetteer said that Iwai had built his *gatō*. Stone items found on or around the mound include flat stone figurines of men (sometimes shaped as groveling servants and sometimes as soldiers carrying quivers) that are probably remnants of the stone figures mentioned in the *Chikugo fudoki*.[84] Thus historians are now quite certain that Iwai was a historical governor of Tsukushi who really was powerful enough to challenge Yamato authority in the closing years of the Keitai reign.

Royal land in outlying regions

Strong clans were emerging in most regions of Japan in those days, particularly on the Kantō plain and the Kibi plateau where huge areas

83 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 95–97. 84 Ibid., pp. 97–99.

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of land had apparently been opened up (probably with the use of advanced irrigation techniques introduced from Korea) for the cultivation of rice. Such developments undoubtedly enriched clans in various parts of the country. But until the outbreak of the Iwai rebellion, the Yamato court had not faced threatening opposition. It is therefore significant that both the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* report that soon after the court had taken steps to quell the Iwai rebellion, similar administrative measures were instituted in both the Kantō and the Kibi. One was to create new royal estates (*miyake*) that were quite different from those that had been established at earlier dates in other parts of the country.

Immediately after describing the defeat of Iwai, the *Nihon shoki* mentions in an item for the twelfth month of 528 that Iwai's son presented the Kasuya royal estate to the court and asked that his life be spared.[85] This shows that a royal estate, an old institution, was being used in a new way. Scholars generally agree that a royal estate, whether old or new, was a piece of land whose inhabitants, buildings, and produce were possessed by a Yamato king as a hereditary right. The early royal estates were, however, located mainly in and around the Nara plain and were administered directly by the Yamato court. The chronicles state that a fourth-century king, Keikō, had been granted the Yamato royal estate while he was crown prince. Recent archaeological investigations indicate that this estate was located around the present village of Miyake in the Shiki District of Yamato and was situated on low marshy ground suitable for wet-rice agriculture, an area drained by several rivers that join the Yamato and where huge burial mounds were built during the fifth and early-sixth centuries. By setting up a royal estate in such an area, the court was apparently thinking mainly of increasing its revenues. Studies of other royal estates mentioned in the chronicles – such as the Yosami in Kawachi, the Shikama within the present city of Himeji, and the Mamuta connected with the aforementioned Mamuta dikes of Kawachi – disclose that each was a choice piece of land possessed and managed directly by the court. Although the Awaji royal estate was made up of fishing villages, it functioned like other royal estates by supplying fish and marine products directly to the court.[86]

Later royal estates such as those set up in Tsukushi and elsewhere after the Iwai rebellion were similar to the earlier ones in that they were productive pieces of land possessed and managed directly by the court.

85 Keitai 22/12, NKBT 68.36; Aston, 2. 17. 86 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 142–4.

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But they also were different in important respects. First, the later estates were not located in central Japan but in outlying regions of special economic and strategic value to the Yamato court and, second, they were obtained and managed through provincial governors (Kuni no Miyatsuko). In earlier times, most governors seem to have had their own estates (also called *miyake*) which were, as in the Iwai case, primary sources of gubernatorial income. But the royal estates emerged in distant provinces after a Yamato king had used military force against (or in support of) a provincial governor: They were presented to a king by governors who then managed them for the court. Thus the later royal estates were both sources of income and instruments of military and political control.[87]

A *Nihon shoki* item for the second year of the reign (535) of Ankan (Keitai's successor) contains a list of royal estates established in more than a dozen provinces.[88] Doubts have been expressed about the accuracy of a report that so many estates were established in a single year and during a reign that was only two years long. Historians have therefore tended to think that the chronicle listed those set up over a somewhat longer period of time. But we now realize that around 535, right after the rebellion in Tsukushi and the military defeats in Korea, the court probably did establish numerous royal estates hurriedly as a means of strengthening its hold on important provinces in that distant region. This view is supported by the observation that many of the royal estates listed were located in Kyushu where strong clans might, if not firmly controlled, complicate the Yamato's efforts to solve the Korean problem.

In 536, just after the reported establishment of numerous later-style royal estates in Tsukushi, the *Nihon shoki* states that the court had all such estates of three Kyushu provinces (Tsukushi, Hi, and Toyo in the central zone) amalgamated into a single Nanotsu royal estate as a "provision against extraordinary circumstances." Even the great Soga no Iname was asked to send grain to Nanotsu.[89] Evidence of this sort suggests that the Iwai rebellion of 527, followed by the Silla seizure of Mimana in 531, caused the court to establish royal estates in this key region as instruments of court control.

Royal estates were soon established in other regions outside central Japan. Particularly significant were the four set up on the Kantō plain not long after the defeat in Korea and Keitai's death. The circum-

87 Ibid., pp. 144–5. 88 Ankan 2/5/9, NKBT 68.54–55; Aston, 2. 31–32.
89 *Nihon shoki*, Senka 1/51, NKBT 68.58–59; Aston, 2.34–35.

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stances of this action are outlined in a *Nihon shoki* item for the first year of the Ankan reign. After a long dispute over who should be appointed governor of Musashi (a province including the present city of Tokyo), a contender named Omi fled to seek support from Yamato. The court then stepped in with military force, appointed Omi as governor, and had Omi's rival executed. Omi then presented to the court four districts of his province as royal estates.[90]

As a result of recent archaeological investigations, it is now known that mounds built in Upper Kenu Province (Gumma Prefecture of today) around the beginning of the fifth century were much larger than earlier ones. These findings demonstrate that the governor of Upper Kenu and his clan had amassed considerable wealth and power by using advanced agricultural methods for coverting virgin land into rice fields. Because the governor of Upper Kenu supported Omi's rival for the post of governor of Musashi, and the burial mounds of Upper Kenu were then larger, it is deduced that the governor of that province had become strong enough to interfere in political and military affairs of the neighboring province of Musashi and that such interference was checked only after the Musashi governor had asked for, and obtained, military aid from Yamato. The presentation of royal estates to the Yamato court by the Musashi governor as soon as Upper Kenu advances had been blocked suggests that these estates (like those established in Kyushu) were later-style royal estates used to increaase the Yamato's control over this important region to the northeast.[91]

Policy disputes

The impact of the disastrous military failure in Korea during the year 529, preceded by a serious rebellion in the heartland of Kyushu, seems to have rocked the foundations of the Yamato kingdom, for Keitai's death was followed by a two-year dispute over succession and by a new clan alignment at court. We do not know precisely when Keitai died but it was probably in 531 when Yamato was facing military defeat in Korea. Some scholars think that Keitai was assassinated. It is generally agreed that his death was followed by a confrontation between the supporters of two branches of the Yamato ruling clan: the backers of Ankan and Senka against the supporters of Kimmei. After carefully weighing the evidence found in reports that are often contradictory, Inoue concluded that Keitai's death came in 531 (after the Iwai rebel-

90 Ankan 1/12/4, NKBT 68.53–55; Aston 2.31. 91 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 153–6.

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lion of 527 and Kenu no Omi's disgraceful retreat from Korea in 530); that Keitai had selected his son Ankan as his successor, but in the face of strong opposition, a two-year interregnum preceded the reign of first Ankan and then this brother Senka; and that Kimmei did not become king until 540, not immediately after Keitai's death in 531 as some sources state.[92]

Behind this long succession dispute lay not only bitter rivalry between clan leaders who supported one or the other of two royal lines but also differences over the question of how the Korean problem should be solved. Although numerous clan chieftains were involved in the dispute, the principal ones were Ōtomo no Kanamura (great deity chieftain in the Keitai reign) and Soga no Iname (promoted to great imperial chieftain in the Senka reign). Ōtomo no Kanamura, the leading supporter of Keitai's sons Ankan and Senka, favored a strong policy toward Silla, whereas Soga no Iname backed the enthronement of Kimmei and opposed the suggestion that another military expedition be sent against Silla.

Lines were sharply drawn over the Korean issue in 540 when the recently enthroned Kimmei asked his ministers how many soldiers were needed to conquer Silla. In his reply, Great Deity Chieftain Mononobe no Okoshi blamed Ōtomo no Kanamura for the sorry state of Japan's foreign affairs, pointing out that Kanamura had been responsible for the first great mistake, made back in 512, of recommending that the court yield to Paekche's request for four Mimana districts.[93] Okoshi might well have added – although the *Nihon shoki* report does not say he did – that members of the Ōtomo clan had already participated in two unsuccessful expeditions to Korea: the fiasco of 529 and the expedition to aid Paekche in 539. Okoshi insisted that this was no time to send more troops, as Kanamura advocated. From the Kimmei conference of 540 emerged two interrelated decisions: (1) not to send more troops against Silla but to continue relying on Paekche to protect Yamato's interests and (2) to remove Ōtomo no Kanamura from his position as top minister at court, a position into which Soga no Iname gradually moved.

The decision to refrain from sending troops against Silla cannot be construed as a general rejection of all proposals to use military force outside Japan. Military expeditions, as well as military supplies and equipment, were subsequently dispatched to Korea at opportune times in the constantly shifting pattern of relations among the penin-

92 Ibid., pp. 103–6. 93 *Nihon shoki* Kimmei 1 (540) 9/5, NKBT 68,65–66; Aston, 2.39.

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sula's three great kingdoms. It might therefore seem that no new policy had been adopted. But a study of reports of contact between Japan and the three Korean kingdoms during the remaining years of the sixth century suggests that consciously or unconsciously, court leaders were convinced that their primary attention should now be given to the task of making Yamato stronger, not to sending armies on foreign expeditions, at least for the time being. The court seems already to have adopted the policy recommended in 583, over forty years later, by a Paekche visitor and court adviser:

> In governing a kingdom well, a ruler must do everything possible to protect and care for his people. Why should he hastily mobilize troops and thereby cause loss and destruction? He should instead try to make everyone – those who serve him in high positions as well as farmers – prosperous and want for nothing. After he has followed this policy for three years, food and soldiers will become plentiful and the people will come to be treated well. Not fearing disaster, they will – like the Yamato king himself – become concerned about the kingdom's difficulties. Then the ruler can build a large number of ships, line them up in his harbors and on the open sea, display them to visitors, and arouse fear abroad. Then a wise envoy should be dispatched to summon the Paekche king.[94]

Just as Japan's Meiji leaders adopted, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the slogan "Rich Country, Strong Army" when faced with the West's overwhelming military might, Yamato ministers seem to have agreed after the 540 conference that Yamato should henceforth concentrate on efforts to maximize its wealth and control.

New control techniques

The *Nihon shoki* reports that Iname and others were sent by Kimmei to the Kibi region in 555 with instructions to set up the Shirai royal estate. It is further recorded, in an item for the next year, that Iname was again sent to the same area to establish the Kojima royal estate.[95] The Kibi plain, like the central zone of Kyushu, was agriculturally rich and strategically important to maintaining contact with the continent. But the steps taken in Kibi were different: (1) The highest-ranking minister, a man who probably had Korean blood in his veins, headed both missions; (2) a man by the name of Itsu was later sent to the Shirai royal estate with instructions to have its farmers registered; and (3) when registration produced the desired results,

94 Bidatsu 12 (583), NKBT 68.145–6; Aston, 2.98–99.
95 Kimmei 16 (555) 7/4 and Kimmei 17 (556) 7/6, NKBT 68.117; Aston, 2.77, 78.

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Itsu was given the *kabane* title of scribe (*fuhito*).[96] Each of these differences suggests that steps were being taken at that time to increase control over, and income from, an important region by utilizing imported managerial techniques at the recently established royal estates.

Households had been registered in earlier times by the northern and southern courts of China as well as by Paekche. And according to a *Nihon shoki* report for the year 540 (almost thirty years before Itsu had been sent off to register farmers of the Shirai royal estate), people of various Japanese provinces had been registered, including 7,053 Hata households.[97] These early household registrations – important to implementing the great reforms (*taika*) of later years – were limited to foreigners like the Hata and Aya. But as indicated by references to household registrations at the Shirai royal estate in Kibi, this technique for keeping track of estate farmers was now being extended to areas outside central Japan, presumably to the populace as a whole.

Yamato's efforts to have the Kibi royal estates managed efficiently were made by officials (such as Itsu) who could read and write. Except for the inscriptions on iron swords and bronze mirrors, no sixth-century written materials have been preserved. But several chronicle references to persons holding the title of scribe leave little doubt that their ability to keep records was highly valued. Surely a kingdom attempting to increase its income from, and control over, distant regions needed accurate records of several kinds. And because the *Nihon shoki*'s and *Kojiki*'s coverage of sixth-century events is increasingly thought to be reliable, it is surmised that the compilers of those chronicles were working from sources that were written down in this last century of the Yamato period but are no longer extant.

Moves to register all residents and keep written records seem to have been paralleled by endeavors to strengthen ancient local-government organs as a means of tightening Yamato control. The first office to receive such attention was probably that of district supervisor (*agata nushi*), one that appeared in the Kinai region, long before this last part of the Yamato period. It was a local office devoted mainly to supplying the court with goods and services. But by the sixth century both the districts and their supervisors were subjected to considerable change, especially those in outlying regions. The change was associated with and affected by the rise of later-style royal estates, as both districts and

96 Kimmei 30 (569) 1/1 and Kimmei 30/4, NKBT 68.127; Aston, 2.87.
97 Kimmei 1 (540) 8, NKBT 68.65; Aston, 2.38–39.

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royal estates were now largely administered by local officials acting in the court's behalf.[98]

A district (*agata*), like a royal estate (*miyake*), was a piece of territory. But whereas the latter was characteristically a personal possession of a Yamato king or clan chieftain, the former had usually been occupied for many years by a local clan whose hereditary head handled secular affairs and served as the chief priest in the worship of the local kami. The establishment of a district, or the appointment of a district supervisor (*agata nushi*), was therefore usually made by a king when he was trying to gain control of that particular area. In distant regions in earlier times, such designations and appointments were largely nominal. But in and around central Japan, a district supervisor quite early became a local agent under court control, even though he was usually the hereditary head of an old clan. And with the extension of Yamato control to outlying regions, district supervisors were made responsible (like royal estate managers) to provincial governors. Such extensions of court control – especially in the Kantō, Kibi, and Tsukushi regions – produced a two-layered system of local government (districts below provinces) that undergirded the later bureaucratic *ritsuryō* order. The tasks of administering the later-style royal estates, and districts headed by district supervisors, must have greatly increased the demand for scribes who were familiar with imported managerial techniques.

Foreign affairs

Although the court was now giving most of its attention to internal affairs, chronicle items for the years after 540 contain numerous references to the receipt of articles and artisans from Korean kingdoms, usually in connection with an exchange of official missions. By 562 the whole Mimana federation had been taken over by an increasingly powerful Silla, which had extended its hegemony southward to the shores of the Yellow Sea and could consequently dispatch diplomatic missions by sea directly to China's Southern Court. Yamato seems to have offered little or no military resistance to Silla's advances. In fact, the chronicles continue to report contacts with Silla (including items about "tribute" being sent for Mimana districts after 750) and sometimes with Koguryŏ, including a fascinating Koguryŏ mission sent

98 These sixth-century institutional changes were analyzed in Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 138–65; and by Yagi Atsuru, "Kuni no Miyatsuko sei no kōzō," *Kodai* vol. 2 of *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 1–37.

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across the Japan Sea in 570. But much more is written about relations with Paekche, especially after the Paekche capital was moved to Pŭyo in 538, the very year in which Paekche is thought to have first sent Buddhist texts to the Yamato court (see Chapter 7).

Paekche was apparently far more worried than Yamato was about the expansive tendencies of Silla, and as usual, Paekche–Koguryŏ relations were strained. The foreign situation seemed especially dark for Paekche in 548 when its northern borders were crossed by Koguryŏ armies. Messages received from Paekche in the following year complained of reports that the Japanese were behind attacks made from the south. But Yamato authorities denied any such complicity, declaring it incredible that the friendly kingdom of Ara "should have gone so far as to send a secret message to Koguryŏ."[99] Four years later the king of Paekche reported that he was then faced with an alliance between Silla to the east and Koguryŏ to the north, and he humbly requested military assistance. Shortly afterward the chronicle includes what is commonly referred to as a report of the official introduction of Buddhism to Japan. The theory that the Buddhist gifts were tied to requests for military assistance is based on two pronouncements by King Kimmei made at about the same time: first, that troops were being sent to help Paekche and, second, that he wanted to obtain books on divination, calendars, and drugs of various kinds.[100] The linkage between the dispatch of military assistance and the receipt of books and scholars was even clearer in 554 when Kimmei reported in the first month of that year that he was dispatching one thousand men, one hundred horses, and forty ships, and when the king of Paekche sent word one month later that he was presenting Korean replacements for specialists in Confucianism, divination, calendars, herbs, music, and Buddhism.[101]

Such developments suggest that the continental cultural influence on Japan was beginning, around the middle of the sixth century, to be colored more by a new interest in learning than by the traditional preoccupation with advanced techniques of production and construction. Thenceforth books and scholars in the fields of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, literature, and history were highly prized. But not a single copy of the sutras or classics brought to Japan before the close of the sixth century has been preserved, and we have virtually no information about the influence of such materials on the intellectual

99 *Nihon shoki* Kimmei 9 (548) 4/3, NKBT 68.96–97; Aston, 2.62–63.
100 *Nihon shoki* Kimmei 14 (553) 6, NKBT 68.104–5; Aston, 2.68.
101 *Nihon shoki* Kimmei 15 (554) 1/9 and Kimmei 15 (554) 2, NKBT 68.108–9; Aston, 2.71–72.

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and religious life of court aristocrats. It is clear, however, that this was a time of preparatory development in the fields of religion, governmental administration, and education for the Asuka enlightenment and later reforms. The Buddhist aspect of the movement will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 7. The remaining pages of this chapter will therefore be devoted to a survey of the roles played by two Soga leaders (Iname who died in 570 and his son Umako who died in 626) in setting the stage for the century of reform.

The Soga clan

Whereas the most influential clan chieftains at court before the rise of Iname were military men, the Soga leaders enjoyed wealth and power that flowed from imported techniques of production and administration. But only the general outlines of Soga history can be gleaned from written sources, largely because later chronicles were compiled by men with an anti-Soga bias.[102]

In 623 Soga no Umako asked Empress Suiko to give him permanent possession of the district of Katsuragi on the grounds that he was descended from the *gaiseki* (imperial in-law) clan of Katsuragi. Although Empress Suiko – herself a Soga – seemed to accept the validity of Umako's claim, she did not accede to his request. Katsuragi descent was also affirmed in 642 when Soga no Emishi (Umako's son) built an ancestral temple (*sōbyō*) named the High Temple of Katsuragi. Although the chronicles do not provide much support for the Soga claim of Katsuragi descent, there does seem to be some basis for the view that Soga chieftains were descendants of Ishikawa Sukune, an official who was called on to deal with a disrespectful envoy from Paekche.

We are not certain that Ishikawa Sukune ever lived or that, if he did, the Soga leaders were his descendants. But the Soga name was linked often and quite early with Ishikawa individuals and places. There is, moreover, an Ishikawa area of Kawachi that is drained by the Ishikawa River, an area consisting of four districts made suitable for wet-rice agriculture by the ambitious irrigation project discussed earlier. This, then, may have been where the Soga first emerged as a powerful clan.

After Soga no Iname reached the position of great royal chieftain,

102 Details of following summary are found in the Bidatsu, Yōmei, and Sushun chapters of the *Nihon shoki*, NKBT 68.133–71; Aston, 2.90–120; and summarized in Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 182–92. Dynastic questions of the times are analyzed in Kiley, "State and Dynasty," pp. 40–48.

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emerged on the winning side of the policy debate in 540, and made important contributions to strengthening court control over the Kibi region, he managed to have two daughters married to King Kimmei. But Iname died before Kimmei's successor had been selected. Moreover, Kimmei was not succeeded by a royal son born of a Soga woman but by the son of a non-Soga woman, who ascended the throne as King Bidatsu and reigned for fourteen years. At the beginning of Bidatsu's reign, Soga no Umako replaced his father in the post of great royal chieftain, though he seems not to have made much progress toward gaining recognition as Japan's leading in-law (*gaiseki*) clan. This was a time of general opposition to Buddhism, when Bidatsu actually issued a ban against the practice of this foreign faith. In addition, Bidatsu's highest-ranking queen was not a Soga. Yet after the death of this non-Soga queen, Bidatsu made one of Iname's daughters his favorite queen. And she was the woman who was enthroned in 593 as Empress Suiko.

Bidatsu's death in 585 was followed by a stormy succession dispute among the supporters of three candidates for the throne: (1) Prince Oshisaka, the son of Bidatsu by his first queen and apparently the son who had been named crown prince by Bidatsu; (2) Prince Takeda, the son of Bidatsu by his second queen (the Soga woman who later became Empress Suiko), and (3) Prince Anahobe, the fourth son of Kimmei by the youngest of his two Soga queens (another Iname daughter). The dispute centered on the chieftains of two powerful clans: Mononobe no Moriya and Soga no Umako. After an exchange of insults at the temporary interment (*mogari*) for the deceased Bidatsu, these chieftains turned to the use of military force, and Umako emerged victorious. His candidate for the throne as Bidatsu's successor, Prince Anahobe, was thus enthroned as King Yōmei in 587, placing Umako in firm control of court affairs. Yōmei's queen, another Iname daughter, gave birth to four imperial sons, the first of which was the famous Prince Shōtoku (574–622). Now the Soga had definitely achieved the status of *gaiseki* clan.

Still, Umako had not yet eliminated all opposition. As soon as Yōmei became ill, the old struggle with Mononobe resurfaced. Once more, Umako and Moriya marshaled their forces for a showdown and once again Umako, allied with the chieftains of other great clans, won. Another Kimmei son by a Soga mother was enthroned as King Sushun in 588. He was thus the second successive occupant of the throne to have a Soga mother, strengthening the Soga's *gaiseki* position. New policies were then adopted: Buddhism was openly supported, and

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plans were made to send a military expedition against Silla. But in the fifth year of Sushun's reign, Umako began to hear rumors that the king himself (Umako's nephew) was resentful and was planning a coup. Reportedly reasoning that he would be killed if he did not take decisive action, Umako arranged to have Sushun assassinated. At this point Suiko was placed on the throne in 593 as the reigning empress. Thus Soga no Umako was now in full control of court affairs, and the Asuka enlightenment had begun.

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CHAPTER 3

THE CENTURY OF REFORM

Japan's history has been deeply marked by reforms adopted during two long but widely separated periods of contact with expansive foreign cultures. The first began around A.D. 587 when Soga no Umako seized control of Japan's central government, made an extensive use of Chinese techniques for expanding state power, and supported the introduction and spread of Chinese learning. The second came after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 when new leaders moved the country toward industrialization and Western ways.

Japanese life was greatly altered by Chinese culture long before the Soga seizure of power in 587 and long after the closing years of the ninth century when a decision was made to stop sending official missions to China. But during the intervening three centuries Japanese aristocrats were understandably fascinated by the power and achievements of China under the great Sui (589 to 618) and T'ang (618 to 907) dynasties, giving rise to action and thought that gave Japanese life of those days a strongly Chinese tone, especially at the upper reaches of society. The first of the three centuries of remarkable Chinese influence – roughly the seventh century and the subject of this chapter – was a time of reform along Chinese lines. The second – the eighth century, which is covered in Chapter 4 – is known as the Nara period, when Japan was ruled from a capital patterned after the Chinese capital at Ch'ang-an. And the third was a time when almost every aristocrat was immersed in one aspect of Chinese learning or another.

Throughout the century of reform there flowed two broad and deep currents of change: one arising from a strong and persistent urge to build a powerful Chinese-style state and the other coming from an increasing openness to diverse expressions of Chinese art and learning. When tracing these movements through this century of reform, one soon notices that they were accelerated and turned in new directions not only by an ever-greater familiarity with Chinese achievements but also by three political upheavals within Japan: (1) the Soga seizure of control over state affairs in 587, which ushered in what has been called

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the Asuka enlightenment; (2) the coup of 645 followed by the adoption of the Great Reforms; and (3) the civil war of 672 (the *jinshin no ran*) after which new leaders were remarkably successful in making Japan a strong and despotic state.

THE ASUKA ENLIGHTENMENT

Historians have tended to think of the Asuka enlightenment as beginning with the 587 seizure of power by Soga no Umako or with the 593 enthronement of Empress Suiko, but the Chinese character of the enlightenment suggests that the reunification of China in 589 may be the most significant starting point, even though Japan did not send an official mission to the Sui court until 600. Before considering the political and cultural history of these early years of Japan's century of reform, let us look at the question of how the rise of this new Chinese empire affected Japan's channels of contact with the continent.

The Sui empire

After the collapse of the Western Chin in A.D. 317, north China was overrun by non-Chinese people and torn by internal strife. For the next 250 years or more, the country was divided by a succession of regional states and kingdoms. Then in 578 a Northern Chou emperor united most of north China, and in 581 a well-connected Northern Chou general (the famous Yang Chien who is known as Emperor Wen-ti) founded the Sui dynasty. In 589 he conquered the powerful Southern Court of Ch'en and brought the whole of China under one rule. The rise of the new empire was followed by the reestablishment of tributary relationships with neighboring states and kingdoms throughout most of east Asia. Visitors from such foreign lands as Japan were impressed by China's massive building projects, which included a walled palace-city about six miles long and five miles wide and an empirewide canal system. The foreigners' attention was also drawn to other achievements: a complex and effective bureaucracy that reached local communities in distant regions, an extensive revenue system, a huge military organization, and detailed codifications of law. Foreign observers interested in state building could also see that China's imperial rule had been reinforced by an ideology in which Confucian rites honored its emperors as Sons of Heaven, Confucian ethics valued obedience to heads of state, Buddhist texts de-

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picted rulers as agents of universal law, and Taoist teachings added legitimacy to imperial control.[1]

The Korean kingdoms located near the China border (Koguryŏ and Paekche) were affected earlier and more deeply by the new Chinese empire than were states located farther away, that is, Silla and Japan. Koguryŏ (the closest) reacted first by mobilizing troops to prevent a possible Chinese advance to the north; Paekche quickly established relations with the Sui court but did not feel seriously threatened; Silla allowed three years to pass before sending a mission; and Japan made no official contact until 600. Because Chinese influence on Japan was affected by a rapidly shifting pattern of relations among the Korean kingdoms, and between those kingdoms and China, an overview of these relationships will help show how contacts with the continent influenced Japan's Asuka enlightenment.

Holding a key position among Korean kingdoms paying tribute to north China courts, Koguryŏ had traditionally sent tribute to one northern court after another. And as soon as the Northern Chou was replaced by the Sui in 581, Koguryŏ immediately sent tribute. But when word reached the king of Koguryŏ in 589 that Northern Chou forces had destroyed the southern Ch'en court and resurrected the unified Chinese empire, he and his advisers assumed that Emperor Wen-ti would soon send armies against Koguryŏ in an attempt to reestablish the Chinese colonial system that had existed in Korea during Han times. The Sui court probably did have such ambitions, as in the following year Wen-ti condemned Koguryŏ for not sending a tributary mission and demanded an apology. For a few years the new Koguryŏ king (Yŏngyang) dealt with the Sui court in the traditional fashion (sending tribute and accepting appointments), and their relations remained amicable.

But in 598 Yŏngyang suddenly mobilized 10,000 horsemen and attacked territory located on the Chinese side of the border. Emperor Wen-ti immediately called up 300,000 troops, ordered an invasion of Koguryŏ, and stripped the Koguryŏ king of his offices and titles. Thereupon Yŏngyang apologized and accepted Sui appointments and awards. The emperor's troops were then withdrawn, but they had suffered heavy losses. For a time Sui–Koguryŏ relationships gravitated toward normalcy, but reports recorded in the *Sui shu* indicate

1 Arthur F. Wright, "The Sui Dynasty, 581–617," in Denis Twitchett, ed., *Sui ad T'ang China, 589–906, Part I*, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 148–9.

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that the position of Chinese court officials who favored another campaign against Koguryŏ was becoming stronger. Afraid that a powerful and independent Koguryŏ might trigger resistance from other peoples in northern regions, Wen-ti's successor (Emperor Yang-ti, who reigned between 605 and 617) organized three campaigns against this Korean kingdom between 612 and 614, after condemning it for "nefarious collusion with the Khitan and Malgal and for violating Sui territory." But not one of the three campaigns was successful. Indeed, the cumulative expense and failure invited widespread disorder and hastened the fall of the Sui dynasty in 618. Scholars have explained the Sui's military failures in different ways, but clearly Koguryŏ was then strong enough to defend itself against massive attacks by the great Chinese empire.[2]

Paekche, to the south and west of Koguryŏ, had long occupied a key position among those kingdoms (including Yamato of Japan) that paid tribute to south China courts. Paekche's response to the rise of a new Chinese empire, therefore, was quite different from that of Koguryŏ, and more directly related to the nature and extent of Chinese influence on Japan's Asuka enlightenment. Having paid tribute to the Ch'en court of south China, Paekche's sympathies were with the south at the time of the 589 war, from which the Sui emerged victorious and a new Chinese empire was born. And yet, as soon as Paekche heard of the Sui victory, it sent a congratulatory message to Wen-ti and made the friendly gesture of returning a Chinese war vessel that had become stranded on an island in the East China Sea. Wen-ti was delighted to receive friendly overtures from Paekche and justified his liberal treatment of that Korean kingdom by pointing out that its envoys had come by sea from a distant land.

Silla, the third major Korean kingdom and the one farthest from China, did not immediately send tribute to the Sui court and, moreover, set out to strengthen its military defenses, apparently sharing some of Koguryŏ's fear that Wen-ti would soon move to restore Chinese control over the entire Korean peninsula. By responding to the rebirth of China's empire in somewhat the same way as Koguryŏ did, Silla was continuing to act like a member of the old northern alliance (in which Koguryŏ's tributary relationship to the dominant north China court had been a major factor), just as Yamato continued to think of Paekche (the central state in the southern alignment) as the principal supporter of, and Silla the major obstacle to, its effort to

2 Ibid., pp. 143–7.

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regain rights and privileges in areas located on the southern tip of the Korean peninsula.

The *Nihon shoki* claims that as early as 591, Emperor Sushun told his ministers that Japan must regain control of Mimana (Kaya). And in the next item of that chronicle we are given the names of individuals placed in charge of the expeditionary force to be sent against Silla. Three officers set out for Korea with more than twenty thousand soldiers under their command. One was sent to Mimana and another to Silla to elicit information about the Mimana situation. We are not sure what happened after the troops arrived in Kyushu, but they seem never to have been transported across the Tsushima Straits to Korea. Finally, in 595 the expedition's commander returned to the capital.[3]

Why did Soga no Umako and the Japanese court decide to take military action at this time of uncertainty surrounding the rise of the new Chinese empire? One view has it that Umako, now in full control of Japanese affairs, wanted credit for expeditiously resolving the Korean problem. But he and his colleagues – well aware that Silla (Japan's old enemy) had not yet sent tribute to the Chinese emperor – may have concluded that Japan had an excellent opportunity, while Koguryŏ was preoccupied with its relations with China, to force a restoration of the rights and privileges that Japan had once enjoyed in Mimana. In any case, the *Sui shu* reports that in 594, the king of Silla finally sent tribute to the Sui court. Now all three Korean kingdoms had become incorporated into the Sui tributary system. This may explain, in part at least, why Japan then dropped the idea of sending an expedition against Silla.

But within three years, the Korean situation was again destabilized, this time by another outbreak of war between China and Koguryŏ, a war that began in 598 (according to the Sui account) with an invasion by Koguryŏ of Chinese territory. Japan's old ally Paekche, whose rivalry with Koguryŏ had been long and bitter, soon became involved in the conflict by offering military support to China. Emperor Wen-ti was delighted with the offer, but Koguryŏ retaliated by invading Paekche and preventing the delivery of the promised assistance. Not long afterward, Umako and his group decided that the situation on the continent was ripe for another attempt to improve Japan's position in Korea. But their approach this time was different: In addition to sending an army against Silla in 600, Japan dispatched an official mission (the first in more than a hundred years) to China. The *Nihon*

3 Sushun 4 (591)/8/1 and 4/11/4, in Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 68, pp. 169–71 and Suiko 3 (595)/7, NKBT 68.174–5.

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shoki claims that the army of more than ten thousand was successful in Silla, forcing its king to hand over six strongholds and to promise annual payments of tribute. But the same report concludes with the statement that as soon as Japanese troops were withdrawn, Silla reinvaded Mimana.[4]

Although the official mission to China was apparently considered diplomatic reinforcement for a military expedition against Silla, and the expedition ended in failure, the reestablishment of direct contact with a reunified China was an event of special significance in the history of Japan. Until 600 the flow of Chinese methods and ideas had reached Japan largely through Korea, especially Paekche. But henceforth there was an increasingly voluminous and direct flow from China. As important as this event was, however, the *Nihon shoki* does not mention it, possibly because the contact did not help Japan resolve its Korean problem or possibly because the Chinese response was not something the chroniclers wished to record. But the *Sui shu* offers considerable details of the mission and provides a fairly long account of contemporary conditions in Japan as reported by Japanese envoys.

After hearing the memorial and the explanations supplied by members of the mission, Emperor Wen-ti admonished Empress Suiko for approaching his court in such a rude manner. He was apparently annoyed mainly by the way that she referred to herself and by the way that Japanese envoys explained her relationship to Heaven. When the Yamato kings had sent missions to the Sung court in the fifth century, they had assumed the posture of foreign kings serving China's Son of Heaven. But instead of following that precedent, Suiko used her Japanese name (including the word for Heaven) and her title (*ōkimi* or "great queen").[5] To Emperor Wen-ti, Suiko's identification of her position with Heaven must have been particularly irksome, for it suggested that she considered herself an equal of the Son of Heaven. We do not know whether the drafters of the memorial were ignorant of the proper way to address a Son of Heaven or were consciously drawing attention to the power that Japan had accumulated since the previous official contact more than a century before. But at the close of the Chinese summary of what the Japanese envoys had to say about conditions in Japan, this comment was made: "Both Silla and Paekche

4 Suiko 8 (600)/2, NKBT 68.176–7.

5 By this time, Japanese myths and names commonly linked Japanese kings and queens with ancestors who had descended to the Japanese islands from the Plain of High Heaven.

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consider Wo [Japan] to be a great country, replete with precious things; and they pay her homage."[6]

After this first contact with the Sui court, Yamato history was colored by two different but related types of endeavor: the use of Chinese administrative techniques for increasing the power of the state, and the introduction of various forms of Chinese learning. Although administrative change was directly related to seventh-century reform, cultural change – especially that connected with the official adoption and spread of Buddhism – seems to have given the Asuka enlightenment its basic character.

Official support of Buddhism

The earliest and brightest rays of the enlightenment emanated from the activities of the immigrant priests who participated in the construction of temples as master craftsmen (temple carpenters, roof-tile and roof-spiral makers, wall-painting artists, sculptors, and wood carvers), providing expertise for building and equipping the forty-six Buddhist temple compounds founded during the Asuka period. These compounds included three famous ones: the Asuka-dera, the Arahaka-ji, and the Ikaruga-ji. Many of their immigrant priests – as scholars of such non-Buddhist forms of learning as Confucianism, Chinese law, and Chinese literature and history – made crucial contributions to the Asuka enlightenment.

Great works of Asuka art created by foreign priests and preserved as Japanese national treasures include (1) the Shaka triad (Shaka *sanson*), Northern Wei–style statue of Shaka and two attending bodhisattvas made in 623; (2) a standing wooden statue of Kannon (known as the Kudara Kannon) with south China characteristics and thought to have been made during the first half of the seventh century; (3) paintings on the sides of a small lacquer altar (the Tamamushi no zushi);[7] and (4) a statue of the healing Buddha (Yakushi *nyorai*) which bears an inscription stating that the statute was completed in 607. All of these national treasures are kept at the Hōryū-ji (the name given to the Ikaruga-ji after it was rebuilt sometime in the seventh century), a truly remarkable

6 *Sui shu* 81:13a–16b, trans. Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories: Later Han Through Ming Dynasties* (South Pasadena, Calif.: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), p. 32.

7 This altar, 2.3 meters high, resembles a small palace on a pedestal. On its pedestal have been painted a golden bodisattva aura (*Konkōmyō*) and a Buddhist saint sacrificing its life to a tiger. It is said to have been used by Empress Suiko in worshiping a guardian Buddha.

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institutional representation of the enlightenment. Other national treasures have come down to us from those times, of which some are thought to be on a par with the finest objects of art produced in contemporary China including a tapestry (the *tenju koku shū-chō*)[8] belonging to the Chūgū-ji nunnery and a wood carving of the Buddha of the Future (Maitreya) held by the Kōryū-ji in present-day Kyoto (see Chapter 10).

Before sketching the process by which institutional foundations were laid for such cultural development, let us look briefly at Japan's increasingly wide use of the Chinese system of writing. For centuries, the Japanese had seen Chinese characters carved on imported mirrors, seals, and swords. It is assumed that by the fifth century the Japanese were keeping various types of written records in Chinese although only inscriptions on mirrors and swords, and the memorial that Yūryaku addressed to the Sung court in 478, have been preserved. But what has come down to us supports the assumption that Japan's first chronicles, particularly the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*, were based on fifth- and sixth-century sources that are no longer extant, as well as on information obtained from Paekche chronicles.

Although the knowledge of writing must have been used in those preenlightenment years mainly for keeping accounts, verifying state appointments, and certifying lines of genealogical descent, a few sixth-century items in the *Nihon shoki* point to a growing interest in other types of written materials. For example, one entry for the year 513 states that the king of Paekche (Muryŏng) sent, as tribute, a scholar of the five Confucian Classics.[9] And three years later Paekche sent another Confucian scholar to replace the one who had arrived in 513.[10] As we noted in Chapter 2, Paekche's contacts with China had been largely with the southern courts, a conclusion substantiated by the *Liang shu* (Liang dynastic history) entry that reports the dispatch of a scholar of Confucian rites (*li*) to Paekche in the year 541. From such spotty evidence it is surmised that Confucian ideas were reaching

8 Preserved only in fragments, this tapestry is an embroidered mandala representing Buddhist heaven and eternal life (*tenjukoku*), which Prince Shōtoku was believed to have attained at the time of death. Designed by immigrant artists, it depicts the figures of one hundred tortoise shells bearing the names of deceased persons. The tapestry was embroidered by Prince Shōtoku's consort and her attendants, and it has an inscription recorded in the "Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu," published in Hanawa Hokiichi, ed., *Gunsho ruijū*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960), vol. 5.

9 The authenticity of this report is reinforced by its parenthetical comment that the name of the Japanese person accompanying the mission was rendered somewhat differently in a particular Paekche source; see Keitai 7/6, NKBT 68.28–29.

10 Keitai 10/9, NKBT 68.33–35.

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Japan several decades before Umako's seizure of power in 587, by way of Paekche from the southern court of Liang.[11]

But books on and scholars of other subjects were also arriving, and many were supplied in response to specific requests made by a Japanese king. The most convincing evidence of a broader and deeper interest in Chinese learning appears in a 553 entry of the *Nihon shoki*. After disclosing that Paekche envoys had come to ask for military assistance, the entry states that five scholars of the Confucian Classics had arrived to replace a Confucian scholar sent to Japan at an earlier date and that nine Buddhist priests had come to take the place of seven scheduled to return. In closing, the report adds that the following additional specialists had arrived in Yamato from Paekche on a rotational basis: one diviner, one calendar specialist, one physician, two herbalists, and four musicians.[12] When we link this reference with sixth-century archaeological findings and official actions taken during the enlightenment years, we see that an increasingly large number of court officials were aware – long before the Soga seizure of power – of the political and personal benefits to be obtained from knowing how to read and write Chinese characters. That is, these officials were learning about Chinese ideas of governance as laid out in the Confucian texts, adopting Buddhist symbols and practices favored by the Chinese, and studying Chinese divination, calendar making, medicine, herbs, and music.

Because Buddhism lay at the center of the sinified cultural mixture known as the Asuka enlightenment, special attention should be given to the way that Buddhism joined Paekche's interests to Soga's fortunes. The connection is revealed in both the timing and wording of the first known reference to the presentation of Buddhist statues and Buddhist scriptures to the Yamato court by a Paekche king. This presentation seems to have been made in 538, the year in which King Sŏngmyŏng of Paekche had been forced by Koguryŏ pressure to move his capital from Ungjin to Puyŏ, farther south and farther away from the Koguryŏ border. According to the *Jōgū Shōtoku Hō-ō tei-setsu*, this was when Sŏngmyŏng sent King Kimmei a Buddhist statue and several volumes of Buddhist scripture. The *Nihon shoki* version of the event (dated 552 rather than 538) is preceded by the statement that King Sŏngmyŏng had made a plea for military aid that would

11 Inoue Mitsusada, "Teiki kara mita Katsuragi no uji," in Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon kodai kokka no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1965).

12 Kimmei 15/2, NKBT 68.108–9.

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strengthen his defenses against aggressive neighbors: Koguryŏ and Silla. In a separate item for the same year, the *Nihon shoki* tells us that the Buddhist gifts were accompanied by a memorial in which Sŏngmyŏng made these points: Great men of the past (including the duke of Chou and Confucius) had full knowledge of the doctrine; people in states as far away as India revered Buddhist teachings; and Buddha himself predicted that his law would spread to the east.[13] Sŏngmyŏng seems to have been arguing, in order to obtain needed military support, that Buddhist universalism had benefited and would continue to benefit the builders of strong states everywhere, especially in such eastern lands as Yamato.

Upon receiving the Buddhist statue and scriptures and hearing what had been said about the wondrous power of Buddha's teachings, Kimmei is said to have "leapt for joy." When he asked his ministers what they thought about honoring the statue, they offered conflicting views. Soga no Iname, head of an increasingly powerful immigrant clan, recommended official sponsorship, reiterating the view that all states to the west worshiped Buddha and that he saw no reason that Yamato should be an exception. Nakatomi no Muraji, head of an old conservative clan, insisted that adoption would anger the native kami. Kimmei therefore compromised by not extending his royal blessing to the foreign faith but instead allowing Iname the freedom to honor the statue in whatever way he wished.

The disagreement between the two clans over the question of whether Buddhism should be officially sponsored reflected fundamentally different assumptions about the authority of a chieftain to rule his clan, or a king to rule the Yamato state: Whereas the immigrant clans felt that their chieftain could or did receive religious authority from the imported Buddhist faith, the older and more conservative clans had become accustomed to the worship of clan kami for which their chieftains were high priests. Thus the Buddhist question was not simply a matter of individual conversion but, rather, a political and social issue that made adoption impossible as long as conservative clans were in control of the court.

Not until 587, nearly a half-century later, was the balance of power altered, and only then was Buddhism officially recognized. The military clash of that year was between immigrant-connected clans such as

13 Kimmei 13/10, NKBT 68.100–3. Both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* state that during the fifth-century reign of Ōjin, a scholar named Wang Jen brought from Paekche ten volumes of the Confucian *Analects* and one volume of a Liang dynasty primer. But these reports, meant to glorify Kawachi no Omi's ancestors as court scribes, were probably fabricated.

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the Soga and Japan-rooted clans like the Mononobe. While troops were being drawn up for the showdown, Soga no Umako vowed to propagate the Buddhist faith throughout the land if he and his allies should win. Accordingly, not long after his victory, envoys arrived from Paekche bringing Buddhist priests, Buddhist relics, temple builders, metalworkers, potters, and painters. Work was soon started on a great Buddhist temple, the Asuka-dera, that came to stand at the very center of enlightenment activity.[14] The *Nihon shoki* goes on to tell of nuns returning from Paekche, a search for timber with which to build Buddhist halls, the conversion to Buddhism of aristocratic young ladies, and the arrival at court of Chinese Buddhist priests.[15] But 593 was truly a remarkable year in the history of Japanese Buddhism. In that year Empress Suiko (just enthroned) ordered her court nobles to support Buddhism; Prince Shōtoku (just appointed crown prince) became involved in the Buddhist activities that led to his reputation as the father of Japanese Buddhism; and Buddhist relics (probably imported) were placed below the Asuka-dera's central foundation stone. A 594 entry in the *Nihon shoki* states that this was when the heads of the leading clans were competing with one another in erecting Buddhist temples "for the benefit of their [deceased] chieftains and parents,"[16] and a 595 item notes that two Buddhist priests (one from Paekche and one from Koguryŏ) arrived, preached their religion widely, and became mainstays of Japanese Buddhism.[17] Finally the first great Buddhist temple compound, the Asuka-dera, was completed in 596.

Until recently, neither the precise location of the original Asuka-dera nor the size and location of its buildings were known. But as a result of meticulous research carried out between 1956 and 1957, archaeologists located the great temple compound and identified and measured each of its main structures. They discovered the foundations of a pagoda built at the center of the compound, three golden halls (*kondō*) erected on three sides of the pagoda, a large main gate at the compound's southern entrance, a corridor running around the halls and pagoda, and a lecture hall outside the corridor to the north.[18] This temple compound is historically significant on several counts: It was the first large continental-style building ever erected in Japan; it occu-

14 Sushun 1 (588)/3, NKBT 68.168–9. The Asuka-dera was later called the Hōkō-ji (Propagation of Buddha Law Temple), but the original name will be used here.

15 Sushun 3 (590)/10, NKBT 68.68–69. 16 Suiko 2 (594)/2/1, NKBT 68.174–5.

17 Suiko 3 (595)/5/10, NKBT 68.174–5.

18 Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo, *Asuka-dera hakkutsu chōsa hōkokusho* (Nara: Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo, 1958).

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pied a central position in Japan's first "permanent" capital; it was the first in a series of great state-sponsored compounds divided into square areas; it had a layout and style similar to those of Buddhist temples already built in Korea; and it possessed a clan-temple (*ujidera*) character common to all Buddhist institutions founded in these early decades of the reform century. What is left of the great Asuka-dera provides concrete and impressive evidence that Japan then stood at the threshold of a new China-oriented period of history.

Another Buddhist temple built in those early Asuka years, the Arahaka-ji (later known as the Shitennō-ji or Four Heavenly Kings Temple) has meaning of a different sort. It seems to have originated with vows that Prince Shōtoku (not Soga no Umako) took in 587 when opposing clan camps were mobilizing troops for war.[19] These vows, as well as later references to the Four Heavenly Kings and their temple at Arahaka-ji, are linked with the prince. Moreover, the Arahaka-ji was not built in the Asuka capital, as was the Asuka-dera built by Soga, but in the port city of Naniwa, some distance to the west and closer to Ikaruga where the prince's palace was later erected. Indeed, the emergence of Arahaka-ji as an important temple seems to have been connected with the rise of Prince Shōtoku to a position of great influence in both internal and foreign affairs.

A tenth-century treatise on the life of Prince Shōtoku flatly states that the statue of the Four Heavenly Kings, made when the prince took his 587 vow, was installed (at the Arahaka-ji) facing west in order that its mysterious power could be captured for "subjugating foreign enemies." The Four Heavenly Kings, prominent in the famous Benevolent King Sutra (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra), were honored for their mysterious power to protect the state. This sutra, central to the early history of Buddhism in both China and Korea, is rated as one of the most important to the history of Japanese Buddhism. And yet it was not mentioned in Japanese chronicles until 660, the sixth year of Empress Saimei's reign. Even the sutras on which Prince Shōtoku is reputed to have written commentaries did not include the Benevolent King Sutra. Thus one wonders whether the *Nihon shoki*'s references to Arahaka-ji as the Four Heavenly Kings temple and to a Four Heavenly Kings statue made by Prince Shōtoku himself were not added at a later date, possibly nearer the middle of the seventh century when Japan was far more worried about the danger of foreign invasion and far

19 Sushun, Introduction (587)/7, NKBT 68.163.

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more involved in the "protect the country beliefs" expressed in the Benevolent King Sutra.[20]

Although we have doubts about early Asuka connections among the Arahaka-ji, Prince Shōtoku, and the Four Heavenly Kings, recent archaeological investigations show that a temple compound actually was constructed in Naniwa in the closing years of the sixth century and that it included a centrally located pagoda, a golden hall, a lecture hall, and both a central and a southern gate. A large number of Asuka period tiles have been found there including some like those excavated from the Asuka-dera site. Also, the ground plan of the compound indicates that it was built early in the Asuka period and that the *Nihon shoki* may have been correct in reporting that its construction was started in 593. I (Inoue) am inclined to think, however, that the temple was not completed until the closing years of the Asuka period, when it became another majestic structure like the contemporary temple compounds erected in Paekche and Silla.

A third temple of early Asuka period, one which has attracted more attention than either the Asuka-dera or the Arahaka-ji, is the Ikaruga-ji (now the Hōryū-ji). Built near Prince Shōtoku's palace, the Hōryū-ji houses great national treasures of Asuka times. From excavations made before World War II, two important discoveries were made. First, the prince's palace, where the *Nihon shoki* says he resided after 605, was located in the eastern part of the present Hōryū-ji compound. Second, a great Asuka period temple compound was built a short distance south of the prince's palace but outside the precincts of today's Hōryū-ji. The remains of this ancient compound (referred to here as the Ikaruga-ji) and of the prince's Ikaruga palace provide hard evidence around which we can now construct the general outlines of Prince Shōtoku's emergence as a dominant figure in state affairs at the turn of the seventh century, just when the state began actively to adopt Chinese methods and ideas for increasing its strength and control.

Archaeological evidence of the existence of an Asuka period residence and temple compound at Ikaruga indicates that in about the year 600, Prince Shōtoku was moving, or was being moved, from the Asuka capital to Ikaruga some twenty kilometers to the north, at the foot of a mountain in the western corner of the Yamato plain. Some have concluded that the prince's move to Ikaruga coincided with his retreat from politics, but I (Inoue) believe that he wanted a base closer

20 Inoue Mitsusada, *Asuka no chōtei*, vol. 3 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1974), pp. 205–6.

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to Naniwa, the gateway to Korea and China. The move did come at about the time the prince was developing a more positive foreign policy, as reflected in the dispatch in 600 of an expeditionary force against Silla and a diplomatic mission to the Sui court of China.

Noting that Ikaruga is quite far from the Asuka capital and outside what is thought to have been Soga territory, some historians have reasoned that the prince had come to enjoy the support of a non-Soga immigrant clan (such as the Kashiwade) whose territory was in the Ikaruga area. That view is supported by recent investigations of the Fujinoki burial mound, located just 350 meters from the Ikaruga-ji and thought to have been built in the last half of the sixth century. Whether the descendants of the person buried there had any special connection with Prince Shōtoku is not definitely known, but the location and size of the mound (40 meters in diameter and enclosing a stone chamber 16 meters long) provides strong evidence that a clan chieftain of extraordinary power and wealth had gained control of that area before Prince Shōtoku moved into his Ikaruga palace and built the Ikaruga temple.

The Fujinoki tomb also has a Korean appearance, which suggests the person buried there was from a clan that, like the Soga, was made up largely of immigrants with close cultural ties to Korea. Iō Yūsuke concluded that the harness found in the tomb was a Korean import. He also stated that the native Japanese of that day would not have known the meaning of the ornamental patterns carved on saddle fittings found in the Fujinoki mound, nor how to make such fittings.[21] The imported grave goods excavated from this mound, the Korean style of the three great temple compounds built at the beginning of the Asuka period, the continental character of Asuka period national treasures stored at the Hōryū-ji, the prominence of Korean priests among the 1,384 clerics (815 priests and 569 nuns) serving in the forty-six temple compounds built by 624, as well as Korean connections with the Soga-dominated court, all suggest that huge strides were being taken (during the Asuka enlightenment) toward the establishment of an urban civilization that was definitely Korean in character.

Preparations for reform

The urge of the Japanese to use continental methods and ideas for state building became stronger after the mission in 600 to the Sui court,

21 *Japan Times*, April 23, 1985, p. 11.

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when Crown Prince Shōtoku was beginning to overshadow Soga no Umako in the handling of state affairs. The prince's rise to prominence was reflected in the 601 decision to start building a new palace for him at Ikaruga and in the 602 selection of his younger brother as commander of a new expeditionary force sent against Silla. After that he was linked with the introduction of continental methods of strengthening the state, highlighted by the 603 adoption of a system of court ranks similar to those of Koguryŏ and Paekche, the 604 formulation of the famous Seventeen Injunctions, and the 607–8 diplomatic exchange with the Chinese court. Although questions have been raised about what part (if any) the prince played in these developments and whether the injunctions were actually written that early, each of these developments was prominent in the pre-645 prelude to the so-called Great Reforms.

Although a system of "caps and ranks" (*kan'i*) had existed in China as early as the Wei dynasty of the third century A.D., the system adopted by Japan in 603 was closest to, and most directly influenced by, sixth-century Koguryŏ and Paekche. They all shared the Sui practice of wearing caps made of purple silk, decorated with gold and silver, and presented to persons whose rank was indicated by feathers of different kinds. The names of the ranks varied from state to state, but those adopted in Japan had a stronger Confucian character than did those in Koguryŏ. Each of the twelve Japanese ranks was named after the greater or lesser measure of one particular Confucian virtue (presumably in a descending order of importance): (1) greater virtue (*toku*), (2) lesser virtue, (3) greater benevolence (*jin*), (4) lesser benevolence, (5) greater propriety (*rai*), (6) lesser propriety, (7) greater sincerity (*shin*), (8) lesser sincerity, (9) greater justice (*gi*), (10) lesser justice, (11) greater knowledge (*chi*), and (12) lesser knowledge.[22]

As in Korea, the bestowal of caps and ranks was paralleled by a change from appointments based on hereditary status to those based on ability and achievement. Whereas the old titles (*kabane*) had been granted to clan and occupational group chieftains as hereditary rights, the new caps and ranks were granted to individual officials who were qualified by experience to perform the special functions of a given office. When Ono no Imoko was appointed head of the 607 mission to the Sui court, he was undoubtedly thought to be well qualified for this important assignment, as he was then at the fifth rank (greater propriety). But upon his return and because his mission was deemed success-

22 Suiko 11 (603)/12/5, NKBT 68.180–1.

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ful, he was advanced to the first rank (greater virtue). Even holders of low-ranking *kabane* in the old order were awarded high caps and ranks at the time, presumably because they were able and experienced. For example, a Korean immigrant by the name of Kuratsukuri no Obitotori, originally holding a *kabane* title lower than that held by the heads of leading clans, was awarded the third rank (greater benevolence) for successfully casting a Buddhist statue honored by the Asuka-dera. That promotion, according to one scholar, gave him the same rank as that held by a nobleman who was a favorite of Prince Shōtoku. It seems clear that the new caps and ranks helped strengthen imperial control by conferring status on appointments and promotions based on merit.

The pace of such a development cannot be accurately measured, but chronicle references of the Suiko period leave no doubt of the greater reliance on experienced and skilled officials who were appointed and promoted on the basis of their ability to perform specialized administrative tasks and who possessed caps and ranks. Under the old clan-title system, occupational group managers (*tomo no miyatsuko*) performed managerial functions for the court and various clans, but during the Suiko period and after the institution of the cap-and-rank system, a new and very high managerial post appeared: imperial secretary (*maetsukimi* or *taifu*). The first-known mention of such an official is made in the *Nihon shoki* account of envoys from Silla and Mimana (Kaya) being received at court. After the envoys had approached the empress and presented their memorials, four imperial secretaries, serving four ministers (three of whom held the *kabane* title of *omi* and one the title of *muraji*), reported to Soga no Umako what had transpired.[23]

Following Empress Suiko's death in 628 and at a crucial point in long discussions over who should be her successor, Soga no Emishi (who dominated political affairs after the death of his father in 626) tried to get the imperial secretaries attached to officials (holding the *kabane* titles of *omi* and *muraji*) to convince Prince Shōtoku's son (Prince Ōe) that Empress Suiko had wanted someone other than Ōe to be her successor.[24] On the basis of such evidence Seki Akira decided that the imperial secretaries, who participated in imperial conferences attended by high-ranking ministers, were under imperial orders to report directly to the throne about what the ministers were saying and thinking about particular issues.

23 Suiko 18 (610)/10/9, NKBT 68.194–5.
24 Jomei, Introduction (628), NKBT 68.218–19; Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 234–5.

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At lower levels of government, officials were selected more frequently for their ability to perform specialized functions. The largest number were probably the occupational group managers engaged in the use of imported techniques for producing weapons and tools, building palaces and temples, and making statues, bells, paintings, and other symbolic and decorative works of art. Most of these managers (as well as the *be* or *tomo* they managed) were probably immigrants who were given such appointments because of their expertise and achievements, not because of birth in a prominent clan.

Although more officials at both central and local government levels were now selected and ranked for their ability to perform particular managerial functions, bureaucratization was not nearly as advanced as it was in Paekche. To be sure, Japanese imperial secretaries were now carrying out specialized functions at court, but they were not yet like the six Paekche ministers (*chwap'yong*) who headed the departments for royal affairs, state finances, public ceremonies, palace security, penal matters, and provincial defense. In foreign affairs the court assigned certain officials (*shōkyaku*) the responsibility of welcoming visiting envoys, but the *shōkyaku* were not associated with anything like Paekche's ten departments for external affairs. Japan also had managers of royal estates and occupational groups, but these were not tied to a complex governmental structure of the type found in Paekche.[25] Although the 603 cap-and-rank system was followed by significant advances toward a new bureaucratic order and prepared the way for the Great Reforms of later years, these bureaucratic arrangements were well behind those of Paekche. The old clan-title (*uji-kabane*) order was still quite strong.

Although we are certain that the rank system was instituted in 603 (this is verified by a statement appearing in the Chinese dynastic history of Sui), the dating of the Seventeen Injunctions is still a subject of discussion and disagreement. Spelled out in a *Nihon shoki* item for the first day of 604,[26] they contain words and phrases suggesting that they were written down at a much later date. Historians who argue that they are spurious tend to point first to the office of provincial inspector (*kuni no mikotomochi*) mentioned in Injunction 12 and remind us that this office did not appear until after the Great Reforms of 645. But the court may have been sending imperial inspectors to outlying provinces as early as Asuka times to inspect the royal estates and other court-

25 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 238–40; Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 53.
26 Suiko 12 (604)/4/3, NKBT 68.180–6.

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controlled property in one or more provinces. A second point made by the doubters is that Injunction 12 seems to have been based on the assumption that Japan's bureaucratic system was already in place, which is not true. But as we noted, an increasingly large number of officials had been appointed – long before 645 – because they were qualified to handle particular administrative tasks. It therefore seems logical to conclude that the Asuka leaders may well have been inspired to write out injunctions that might make these officials more effective instruments of imperial control.

Somewhat similar injunctions had been handed down by Chinese emperors for centuries. As was made clear by Okada Masayuki, five such injunctions were proclaimed by a Western Chin emperor back in the year 268. In 544 a Western Wei emperor addressed six injunctions to local officials, enjoining them to (1) carry out administrative affairs with compassion, (2) value learning, (3) make the land productive, (4) use persons who are able and good, (5) hand down penalties sparingly, and (6) tax fairly. But these differed from Japan's Seventeen Injunctions in basic ways. Whereas the six Western Wei injunctions were addressed to local officials and were firmly grounded in Confucian principles, those of Japan were directed to central government officials and were rooted, with a strong Confucian coloration to be sure, in genealogical thought and belief. It is thought, therefore, that the Japanese injunctions (rules and principles for officials to follow in exercising absolute obedience to the emperor) were appropriate to the political concerns and conditions of Asuka times.

The first three of the Seventeen Injunctions provide foundations of ideological support for the remaining fourteen. Injunction 1 affirms the primacy of the Confucian principle of "harmony above and friendliness below" by which officials are enjoined to obey the emperor and their parents. Injunction 2 advocates conversion to Buddhism, declaring that this will enable an official not only to transform bad into good but also to follow established teachings (presumably Confucian as well as Buddhist) and to straighten out everything crooked. But Injunction 3 seems to me (Brown) to provide the most central pillar of ideological support by equating the emperor with Heaven and stating that imperial orders must always be obeyed. Injunctions 4 through 17 tell officials just how they should serve the emperor in accordance with Confucian and Buddhist teaching: to act with propriety (4), to prescribe penalties cautiously (5), to hand down punishments impartially (6), to fill offices with able persons (7), to rise early and work late (8), to act in good faith (9), not to hold others in contempt (10), to recognize meritorious service

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(11), not to arrogate the ruler's authority to oppress the people (12), to treat underlings fairly (13), not to be jealous (14), not to put personal consideration above the public weal (15), not to trouble farmers at planting and harvesting times (16), and to consult others and reach a consensus on important issues (17). These injunctions reflect Confucian principles and stress absolute obedience to the emperor and can be thought of as expressions of a Confucian-oriented, emperor-centered state ideology.

For centuries, historians have wondered why the famous Seventeen Injunctions included no references to kami belief or to the kami origins of the imperial line. A legal scholar of the Meiji period, Ariga Nagao, concluded that the person or persons who had written the injunctions had decided, in the face of arbitrary behavior by leaders of the Soga clan, that a Confucian ideology explaining how a state should be governed was more useful than was an ancient belief in kami descent. But it should be remembered that Japanese envoys sent to the Sui court in 600 had said, according to the dynastic history of Sui, that the Japanese had their own conception of imperial authority: "The Queen of Wa deems Heaven to be her elder brother and the sun her younger brother."[27] Ishimoda Shō concluded that the compilers may have omitted references to the ruler's divine descent from kami and relied on the Chinese conception of "heaven overspreads and the earth upholds" because the Sui emperor had stated that the Japanese view of rulership was unknown in China. But even though there are no direct references to kami origins, it is clear that the special position of the emperor – as set forth in Injunction 3 on absolute obedience – was firmly grounded in beliefs about his sacred descent. But probably the articulation and institutionalization of these beliefs did not come until the reign of Temmu in the last half of the seventh century.

A third significant event, following the adoption of ranks and the formulation of the Seventeen Injunctions, was an exchange of official missions with the Sui court in 607 and 608. Since the first mission of 600 and the rise of Prince Shōtoku to a position of influence at court, Japan had moved slowly toward a foreign policy position centered on relations with the reestablished Chinese empire. Old attitudes toward the Korean kingdoms (antagonism toward Silla and Koguryŏ and friendship with Paekche regarding the restoration of Japanese interests in southern Korea) had not been abandoned, but military expeditions were no longer sent against Silla, and more attention than ever was

27 *Sui shu* 18:13a–16b; Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 29.

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given to the use of continental techniques for strengthening the state. It was in the context of this new Sui-centered view of foreign affairs that the Japanese government sent its second mission to China in 607.

These were years of rapid change on the Asian continent. In 604 – the year in which the Seventeen Injunctions are said to have been written by Prince Shōtoku – the founder of the Sui dynasty (Emperor Wen-ti) died. He was succeeded by Yang-ti, who moved immediately to beautify the capital, build canals in various parts of the empire, and display military might in aggressive action against neighboring peoples. In 607, the year the Japanese mission was dispatched, Yang-ti toured the northeast and established contact with the T'u-chüeh, a Turkish people of Mongolia and central Asia. Koguryŏ had also established relations with those same people, causing Yang-ti and his court to conclude that Koguryŏ was a menace. Paekche and Silla had long been preoccupied with the possibility that they would again be invaded by Koguryŏ troops, and so they were not displeased to hear that Koguryŏ's relations with the Sui empire had soured. Both Paekche and Silla sent envoys to the Sui court complaining of Koguryŏ's aggression and requesting that it be punished.[28] Surrounded by enemies, Koguryŏ opted to establish friendly relations with distant Japan. As early as 605, before the open break with Sui, Koguryŏ had sent gold to Japan for a Buddhist statue at Asuka-dera.[29]

At this critical juncture the Japanese decided to send envoys to the Sui court.[30] The dynastic history of Sui relates that the chief of that mission (Ono no Omi) explained his objective in these words: "Our queen has heard that beyond the ocean to the west there is a Bodhisattva sovereign who reveres and promotes Buddhism. For that reason, we have been sent to pay her respects. Accompanying us are several tens of monks who have come to study Buddhist teachings." The same source also states that Ono no Omi submitted a memorial containing this sentence: "The Child of Heaven (*tenshi*) in the land where the sun rises addresses the Son of Heaven (*tenshi*) in the land where the sun sets."[31] Japanese and Chinese historians have long debated the question of whether this memorial was intentionally insulting. Certainly Yang-ti was angered for he is said to have turned to his foreign minister and ordered: "If memorials from barbarian states are written by persons who lack propriety, don't accept them." From the Sui point of view,

28 Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," pp. 143–4; Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 246–7; Lee, *A New History of Korea*, p. 47.

29 Suiko 13 (605)/4/1, NKBT 68.186–7. 30 Suiko 15 (607)/7/3, NKBT 68.189.

31 *Sui shu*, Ta-yeh 3 (607); Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 32.

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Japan was no more than an isolated and insular state to the northeast. Japanese court officials, however, were apparently no longer willing to have their ruler referred to as merely a Wa king or queen.

Although Yang-ti was upset by the wording of the memorial, he could not overlook the possibility of obtaining Japan's support for his plans to put Koguryŏ in its place. He therefore ordered the well-connected P'ei Shih-ch'ing to accompany Ono no Omi back to Japan. Both the Sui chronicles and the *Nihon shoki* provide considerable detail about the places they visited (such as Paekche) before arriving at Naniwa in the sixth month of 608, where a new building had been erected for properly receiving the Chinese envoy and his entourage of twelve. When the party arrived at Asuka, P'ei Shih-ch'ing delivered a message that, according to the *Nihon shoki,* stated:

> The emperor of China greets the Wo empress.
> Your envoys . . . have arrived and made their report.
> Having been pleased to receive the command of Heaven to become emperor, We have endeavored to extend virtue (*toku*) everywhere, irrespective of distance.
> We are deeply grateful that the Wo empress – residing in the seas beyond – bestows blessings on her people, maintains peace and prosperity within her borders, and softens manners and customs with harmony.
> Being grateful that you have sent tribute from such a great distance, We send P'ei Shih-ch'ing . . . to convey Our greetings.[32]

The Sui chronicle says nothing about a message being handed to the Japanese empress but does mention that she was pleased to grant P'ei Shih-ch'ing an audience and that she answered him as follows:

> Because We had heard of the great Sui empire of propriety and justice located in the west, We sent tribute. As barbarians living in an isolated place beyond the sea, We do not know propriety and justice, are shut up within Our borders, and do not see others. Now that the streets have been cleared and a visitor's hall has been decorated, We await the Sui envoy, wishing to hear about the restoration of the Chinese empire.[33]

Obviously the Japanese version of the Yang-ti message to Empress Suiko and the Chinese report of what she said to P'ei Shih-ch'ing have been edited: Surely Yang-ti did not refer to Suiko as an empress, using the same character found in the Chinese word for emperor, and surely Suiko did not express ignorance of "propriety and justice" right after instituting a ranking system with four ranks bearing names of different degrees of propriety and justice.

32 Suiko 16 (608)/8/12, NKBT 68.190–1.
33 *Sui shu* Ta-yeh 4 (608), Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 33.

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Both reports, however, reveal a strong Japanese interest in what was going on in China. One statement made in the Chinese account of what the empress said to P'ei Shih-ch'ing has a ring of truth: She wanted to hear about the restoration of the Chinese empire. But a more direct expression of Japanese curiosity can be found in the Chinese report that the Japanese had sent several students to study Buddhism. Moreover, when P'ei Shih-ch'ing returned to China in 608, he was accompanied by eight more students sent to China for study.[34] One bore the name of a powerful Chinese immigrant clan associated with the Soga, and the names of three others indicate that they too (or their ancestors) had come from China, had a knowledge of Chinese that would make it easier for them to achieve their objectives in China, and were not selected because they belonged to an old *kabane*-holding clan but because they held (or would hold) appointments based on merit – that they were, or would become, members of Japan's incipient bureaucracy.

Later references to these same students reveal that most of them remained in China for more than twenty years and, after returning to Japan, occupied influential positions in various fields. At least three (Takamuko no Kuromaro, the priest Min, and Minabuchi no Shōan) became leading architects of reform.

THE GREAT REFORMS

Before considering the reforms adopted after 645, let us look briefly at two aspects of their historical background.

The T'ang empire

Koguryŏ envoys arrived in Japan during the summer of 618 and reported that their state had successfully repelled an invasion of Chinese armies.[35] We do not know whether they had come to request military assistance or simply to express satisfaction with their victory against the great Chinese empire. But not long afterward, and possibly as a result of defeats suffered at the hands of Koguryŏ, the Sui dynasty was destroyed by rebels whose leader was enthroned as Emperor Kao-tsu (r. 618–26), founder of the T'ang dynasty.

T'ang rule (618 to 906) came at a particularly glorious time in Chinese history. T'ang art (especially its sculptures and paintings) and literature (notably its poetry) are regarded as truly remarkable human

34 Suiko 16 (608)/9/11, NKBT 68.192–3. 35 Suiko 26 (618)/8/1, NKBT 68.201–3.

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achievements. Indeed, institutional and social changes made during the T'ang period have led such distinguished scholars as Naitō Torajirō to say, mainly because of the importance assigned to the appearance of an increasingly complex and extensive bureaucracy of officials selected largely on the basis of merit, that this was when China moved into the modern age. The rapid economic growth of those years, arising from increased agricultural production and expanded commerce, has led some scholars to suggest that by the thirteenth century, China was on the verge of becoming a capitalist society. In any case, as one of the world's most impressive empires, T'ang left the stamp of Chinese civilization on the neighboring peoples of Asia.[36]

The first T'ang emperors were bent on restoring and extending China's imperial greatness. But realizing full well that the collapse of Sui had been due in the main to military failures against Koguryŏ, the T'ang rulers were quite cautious on that front. Koguryŏ dispatched tribute to the T'ang court as early as 619; Paekche did likewise in 621; and Silla followed suit in 624. And the kings of all three Korean kingdoms accepted T'ang appointments, indicating their incorporation into the T'ang tributary system.[37]

Japan's old enmity toward Silla temporarily softened after the first Japanese mission to Sui in 600 and the rise of Prince Shōtoku to a position of influence in foreign affairs. Improved relations with Silla account, in part at least, for the *Nihon shoki*'s report that a large number of people migrated from Silla to Japan in 608 and that envoys from Silla and Mimana (Kaya) arrived – and were well received – in 610. But following the demise of Sui and the rise of T'ang in 618, Japan again became hostile toward Silla. When that state sent "tribute" to Japan in 621 but did not follow the precedent of bringing along Mimana emissaries, Japanese officials interpreted this break with tradition as a clear indication that Silla had absorbed, or was going to absorb, Mimana.[38] Not long after the death of Prince Shōtoku in 622, a faction at court advocated war with Silla and closer cooperation with Paekche, and an army of "tens of thousands" reportedly invaded Korea in 623.[39] Scholars explain Japan's foreign policy reversal in two ways: that the Sui collapse suggested to Japanese leaders that their old position in Korea could now be regained and that the death of Prince Shōtoku left the hawkish Soga no Umako in sole control of foreign affairs.

36 Denis Twitchett, "Introduction," *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, pp. 8–38.
37 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 256–7.
38 Suiko 29 (621), NKBT 68.204–5; Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, p. 261.
39 Suiko 31 (623)/7, NKBT 68.206–9.

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But relations with Silla were soon improved, possibly because Japanese leaders were suddenly made less belligerent by Silla's conciliatory moves. The court was surely affected also by reports and recommendations made in 623 by two Chinese Buddhist priests and two Chinese medical doctors who had arrived in Japan by way of Silla. Reporting that the Japanese students who had been sent to China in 608 had completed their studies, these Chinese visitors recommended that the Japanese students be brought home. After passing along the observation that the T'ang empire had become strong and well regulated, they also advised that Japan establish and maintain relations with the T'ang court.[40] We do not know whether these priests and doctors had been sent by way of Silla for the purpose of heading off Japanese attacks against Silla or whether they (and the Japanese students in China with whom they had apparently been in contact) were simply pointing out, on the basis of their observations of T'ang power, that Japan would benefit from regular relations with this new and flourishing Chinese empire. Whatever the reason, there are no more reports of Japanese military action against Silla. But in spite of the advice received from the doctors and priests, Japan did not send an official mission to the T'ang court until 630 – after the death of three influential Asuka period leaders: Prince Shōtoku in 622, Soga no Umako in 626, and Empress Suiko in 628. Meanwhile, the Chinese empire was becoming stronger and wealthier than ever under Emperor Tai-tsung, who reigned from 626 to 649.

Japan's delay in establishing relations with T'ang was probably due to unsettled conditions in both lands. China was not reunified until 624; a violent coup brought about the overthrow of Kao-tsu in 626; and an unpleasant succession dispute erupted in Japan after Empress Suiko's death in 628. But when the mission was finally organized in 630, its assistant head was one of the Chinese doctors (E'nichi) who had arrived in Japan by way of Silla seven years earlier.[41] Both the dispatch of the mission and E'nichi's position as second in command suggest that the earlier recommendations made by E'nichi and his three Chinese colleagues had been taken seriously. After the envoys arrived at the T'ang court, Emperor Tai-tsung first announced that Japan, being so far away, need not send tribute every year. Then he announced that a high-ranking aristocrat (Kao Piao-jen) had been appointed head of a mission to accompany the envoys home and to extend personal greetings to Japan's new emperor.[42]

40 Suiko 31 (623), NKBT 68.205–6. 41 Jomei 2 (630)/8/5, NKBT 68.228–9.
42 *Hsin T'ang shu* Chen-kuan 5 (631), Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 39.

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This first official T'ang mission to Japan, arriving in 632, was significant on three counts. First, it went by way of Silla – as did the Chinese doctors and priests – and arrived in Japan in the company of a Silla mission, suggesting that Silla had already achieved a special position in T'ang's relations with the Korean kingdoms and was expected to serve as a mediary in future contacts between the T'ang court and Japan. Second, the Japanese court arranged an elaborate welcome that symbolized a new and official interest in the powerful and expanding T'ang empire. And third, several Japanese who had gone to China for study as far back as 610 returned home with the Chinese envoys, providing Japanese authorities with reliable sources of information on various aspects of Chinese civilization.[43]

Opening channels of direct contact with the T'ang was complicated somewhat by the reemergence of conflict and rivalry among the Korean kingdoms. Even though they had been incorporated into the T'ang tributary system, they continued to invade one another's territory. Because of these squabbles, T'ai-tsung again became suspicious of Koguryŏ's intentions. In 631 – at about the time that the T'ang mission was on its way to Japan by way of Silla – T'ai-tsung heard that Koguryŏ had built a monument in honor of its soldiers killed in wars with Sui China, and he promptly ordered military retaliation. Chinese armies demolished the hated monument and gathered up the remains of Chinese soldiers who had died in Koguryŏ. Assuming that T'ang was considering further military action, the king of Koguryŏ built more than a thousand forts at places where the Chinese might strike, and he sought to improve his relations with Paekche.

As early as 630 both Koguryŏ and Paekche sent envoys to Japan and, according to the *Nihon shoki*, offered tribute, possibly attempting to obtain support if invaded by Chinese troops. In 631 Paekche's king even had a member of his own royal family delivered to Japan as a hostage, a traditional sign of a state's urgent need for military assistance. The other Korean kingdoms involved in the T'ang–Koguryŏ confrontation also sought Japanese backing. In the face of an impending T'ang attack on Koguryŏ, Japan seemed at first to stand on the sidelines. And yet its decision in 630 to send an official to the T'ang court and to establish more friendly relations with Silla, suggested a pro-T'ang tilt, although Japan's long-standing ties with Paekche could not be easily forgotten or severed. Not much happened during the 630s either to sharpen the confrontation or to force Japan into one or

43 Jomei 4 (632)/8, NKBT 68.288–9; Jomei 5 (633)/1/26, NKBT 68.230–1.

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the other of the two camps. Still, in 639 and 640 more students who had studied in China returned home by way of Silla.

Then in 641, after a T'ang official returned from a tour of inspection of Koguryŏ, Emperor T'ai-tsung decided that the time had come for military action. By the following year Koguryŏ, too, was mobilizing for war, and in 643 T'ai-tsung warned both Koguryŏ and Paekche to break off aggressive activity against Silla. But the new king of Koguryŏ disregarded these warnings, and so T'ai-tsung ordered his troops to attack this uncooperative Korean kingdom and requested Paekche and Silla to provide support. In the sixth month of 645, just as T'ai-tsung and his armies were crossing the Liao River, Prince Naka no Ōe (the future Emperor Tenji) and his group were setting up a new government in Japan, having thwarted the control by the Soga that had lasted for more than fifty years. It was therefore under the shadow of a powerful and expanding T'ang empire that Japan's great reforms (*taika kaishin*) were adopted.

Political upheaval

After Emperor T'ai-tsung's preparations for war in 641 against Koguryŏ, all three Korean kingdoms were beset by internal and external strife as they sought to strengthen themselves for anticipated invasions. Japan, too, could not help but be affected. The Japanese internal upheaval of 645 did not arise directly from disagreement over foreign policy issues but, rather, from more than a decade of growing struggle for power at court. On one side was a group of clans headed by the Soga, and on the other was an increasingly strong group of imperial princes, court officials, and clan chieftains who had been united by common feelings of irritation with (1) the arbitrary and ruthless behavior of the Soga ministers, (2) the consistent Soga opposition to and eventual elimination of Prince Shōtoku's son, and (3) the failure of the Soga regime to make an effective and extensive use of men familiar with Chinese techniques for increasing political control.

Antagonism between the two groups broke out after the death of Empress Suiko in 628 over the question of who should succeed her. The empress had not named a new crown prince to replace the recently deceased Prince Shōtoku, but two princes had strong claims to the throne: Prince Tamura, the son of King Bidatsu's crown prince (who never became emperor), and Prince Yamashiro no Ōe, the son of Prince Shōtoku. Both were grandsons of former emperors, but Prince Yamashiro no Ōe seems to have had the strong claim: His grandfather

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had been emperor more recently; his father Shōtoku had shared rulership with Empress Suiko; and his mother was a daughter of Soga no Umako. And yet Soga no Emishi, who had replaced Umako as head of the Soga clan in 626, did not want the son of the deceased Crown Prince Shōtoku enthroned, probably because he preferred an emperor whose rule would be largely symbolic. Whatever the reason, Emishi schemed to induce leading clan chieftains to accept a fabricated report that Empress Suiko had wanted Prince Tamura to succeed her. But two high-ranking aristocrats, Shōtoku's son Prince Yamashiro and an Emishi uncle by the name of Sakaibe no Marise no Omi, refused to accept this as an authentic expression of imperial will. According to the *Nihon shoki* account (which has an anti-Soga bias), Prince Yamashiro's meeting with the empress in her last hours left him with the distinct impression that she expected him to succeed her. Nevertheless, Prince Yamashiro decided to go along with the engineered consensus, stating that he would follow the teachings of his father and be "patient, not wrathful."[44]

But Sakaibe no Marise was impatient and angry. At a final meeting of chieftains, he hotly announced that he had nothing more to say and stomped out. As head of the Sakaibe branch of the Soga clan and brother of the deceased Soga no Umako, he soon created another stir when at a Soga meeting set up to make plans for building a tomb for Umako,[45] he openly aired his views on the succession issue. Emishi could not abide such opposition, even from his father's brother. He therefore ordered his troops to surround the Marise residence, forcing the strangulation of Marise and the suicide of his eldest son. Then Prince Tamura ascended the throne as Emperor Jomei. But Emishi's ruthless action against a member of his own clan aroused resentment that, after further provocation, culminated in the coup of 645.

Emperor Jomei's death in 641, just as T'ai-tsung was calling up troops for a massive invasion of Koguryŏ, refueled the old conflict over who should occupy the throne: either Prince Yamashiro (son of Crown Prince Shōtoku) or Crown Prince Naka no Ōe (Jomei's eldest

44 Jomei, Introduction (628), NKBT 68.226–7.

45 The Ishibutai tomb, thought to have been built for Soga no Umako, is located on a slope near the village of Asuka. It has an inner chamber 7.7 meters long, 3.5 meters wide, and 4.7 meters high, as well as an entering corridor 20 meter long and 2.5 meters wide. As a result of archaeological research carried out there between 1933 and 1935, we now know that the entire mound was about 51 meters square and was surrounded by a ditch and, farther out, by an embankment that gave the entire tomb an area 81 by 83 meters. Nearby, archaeologists also found what is thought to have been the remains of Umako's palace. See Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 264–5.

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son). Because Crown Prince Naka no Ōe was then only sixteen years old and not mature enough to rule, Prince Yamashiro was again the strongest candidate. But Emishi still did not want him to become emperor and favored, instead, another son of Jomei: Prince Furuhito no Ōji, whose mother was a daughter of Umako. Emishi did not, however, receive much backing for the proposal and had to agree that Jomei's empress should follow the Suiko precedent and ascend the throne. She thus reigned as Empress Kōgyoku (642 to 645).

During early months of Kōgyoku's reign, Emishi's son Iruka seized control of administrative affairs, gaining the reputation of being even more authoritarian than his father: He was said to have been such a terror that "robbers dared not pick up anything dropped along the road."[46] But before the year was out and while Iruka was exerting pressure on people to supply more labor for the construction of two tombs (one for his father and another for himself), he was openly berated by the sister of Prince Yamashiro for acting like an emperor and employing forced labor for his own personal ends. Being even less able than his father to accept criticism or opposition, Iruka resorted immediately to the use of military force. As a result, some twenty-three descendants of Prince Shōtoku, including Prince Yamashiro and several members of his immediate family, were driven to suicide. Such brutal treatment of an illustrious branch of the imperial family horrified even Iruka's father Emishi.

By the next spring, three important aristocratic figures were working out a plan to forcibly remove Iruka and his clan from positions of power. The triumvirate was made up of (1) a bureaucrat by the name of Nakatomi no Kamatari who came to be known as Fujiwara no Kamatari (614–69), founder of the Fujiwara clan; (2) a son of Emperor Jomei, the future Emperor Tenji (626–71); and (3) the son of the high-ranking Soga no Ishikawa Maro (d.649), a clan chieftain whose father had favored the enthronement of Prince Yamashiro back in 629. From a review of the backgrounds and interests of these three men, the roles they performed at the time of the coup, and the posts they were awarded in the post-645 government, we can see something of the proreform, anti-Soga character of their rebellious movement.

Nakatomi no Kamatari, the principal architect of the coup, has been referred to as an early bureaucrat, as he held a high rank and office that were bestowed on him mainly because of his demonstrated ability

46 Kōgyoku 1 (642)/1/15, NKBT 68.236–7).

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and achievement. As early as 629, when Emishi was trying to force clan leaders to accept the fabricated report that Empress Suiko had wanted Prince Tamura to follow her on the throne, Kamatari's father was one of the four imperial secretaries whose views were decisive in the selection of Prince Tamura to ascend the throne as Emperor Jomei. Kamatari's father was therefore influential but had not yet become a Soga opponent or a reform advocate. Kamatari held the same high rank and office as his father did and probably attended high-level court conferences (*byōgi*). According to the Nakatomi clan chronicle (the *Kaden*),[47] Kamatari was fond of learning, read widely, and displayed a special interest in a Chinese classic on military strategy (the *Liu-t'ao*), suggesting a persistent preoccupation with foreign and internal affairs. After 632, when the Buddhist priest Min returned from twenty-five years of study in China and began lecturing on divination (*shūeki*), Kamatari frequented Min's temple. After 640, the year in which Minabuchi no Shōan returned from his thirty-three years in China, Kamatari regularly called on Shōan. So it is thought that by the 640s, Kamatari had become a studious and inquiring bureaucrat who was concerned with the burning political question of what the eastward advance of T'ang meant for Japan.

At the time of the 641 dispute over who should succeed the deceased Emperor Jomei, Kamatari seems to have favored the candidacy of Prince Yamashiro. Then after the decision to choose Empress Kōgyoku and the forcible elimination of Prince Yamashiro and all the members of his immediate family, Kamatari took steps that led directly to the coup of 645. He first approached two imperial princes: Prince Karu (who was later enthroned in 645 as Emperor Kōtoku) and Prince Naka no Ōe (who ascended the throne in 661 as Emperor Tenji). Kamatari apparently felt that if one of these two princes should become the emperor, he should actually rule and not simply be a front for some clan chieftain. But in order to establish imperial rule of this kind, he knew that the Soga must be ousted from their positions of control and that this could be done only with military might. He therefore contacted Soga no Ishikawa Maro, a military man who was not on good terms with Iruka and whose father had held reservations about Emishi's forcing the enthronement of Jomei. With the military backing of this Soga malcontent, Kamatari was able to devise a plan

47 The first of the two *Kaden* volumes was written by "the great minister," probably Kamatari's grandson Fujiwara no Nakamaro who was chancellor between 760 and his death in 764. Nakamaro, who may have compiled this part of the *Kaden* while he was chancellor, seems to have had access to sources not available to the compilers of the *Nihon shoki*.

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for establishing the kind of imperial rule that he felt would enable Japan to meet the challenge of the expanding T'ang empire.

The compilers of the *Nihon shoki* were obviously aware that the assassination of Soga no Iruka on the twelfth day of the sixth month of 645, during a court ceremony in which memorials from the three Korean kingdoms were being read to Empress Kōgyoku, was truly important. But before discussing the details of what transpired, they described (in items for the eleventh month of the previous year) Iruka's nefarious activities: building two great mansions (one for himself and one for his father) that were like imperial palaces, calling Soga offspring princes and princesses, erecting a moat-encircled house that looked like a castle, storing up military weapons, and making certain he was guarded constantly by fifty sturdy soldiers from the east. Between these reports and the one dealing with the coup itself, the compilers inserted two items (one for the first month and the other for the fourth month of 645) regarding mysterious developments: The first was the humming of a band of monkeys that could not be seen (interpreted as messengers from the Sun Goddess), and the second was about a Korean monk who had learned (from a tiger) how to cure any disease, even how to make a barren mountain green. Then a short item for the eighth day of the sixth month (four days before the palace coup) tells us that Prince Naka no Ōe had secretly revealed his plan to have Iruka killed.

The *Nihon shoki* report of the coup begins by explaining that although Iruka was a suspicious man who always carried a sword, Nakatomi no Kamatari had shown entertainers how to get him to put his sword aside. Prince Naka no Ōe made the following preparatory moves: closed the palace gates, bribed certain guards, hid a long spear at a convenient place in the Great Hall of State (Daigokuden) where the memorials were to be read, arranged for the support of soldiers, and ordered four armed men to kill Iruka. But at the appointed time, key men in the plot became frightened: The body of the man reading the memorials became "moist with streaming sweat, his voice was indistinct, and his hands shook." Even the four designated killers were apparently intimidated by Iruka's prestige. And so Prince Naka no Ōe himself rushed forward and with a sword "cut open [Iruka's] head and shoulder." Before dying, Iruka protested his innocence and pleaded for an investigation. Then Prince Naka no Ōe placed his case before the empress, stating that the Soga wished to destroy the imperial house and to subvert imperial authority. Finally he asked her: Do you want Soga descendants to replace imperial descendants? When

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the Empress withdrew to consider, the four assassins attacked and killed the wounded Iruka, thereby bringing to a close a half-century of Soga control. Empress Kōgyoku immediately abdicated and Prince Furuhito (Iruka's favorite candidate for the throne) entered the Buddhist priesthood. The political stage was thus set for the entry of three famous reform-minded leaders: Prince Naka no Ōe with imperial dignity, Nakatomi no Kamatari with clan power and knowledge of modern ways to govern, and Soga no Ishikawa Maro with military might.[48]

The Great Reforms

The day after Iruka was killed, Kamatari recommended that Prince Karu (the younger brother of Empress Kōgyoku and a student of Confucianism) occupy the throne as Emperor Kōtoku and that Prince Naka no Ōe take charge of state affairs, just as Prince Shōtoku had done during Suiko's reign. Under Kōtoku and his crown prince, three ministerial positions were created and filled: (1) minister of the left for Abe no Uchi Maro no Omi, whose father had also been an imperial secretary during the reign of Empress Suiko; (2) minister of the right for Soga no Ishikawa Maro, the rebels' military commander; and (3) minister of the center, a ministerial position unlike any that had existed in China, for Nakatomi no Kamatari, making him something like a personal adviser to the emperor and the crown prince.

The China specialists were also appointed state scholars (*kuni no hakase*). The first was Min, the Buddhist priest who as a "recent Chinese immigrant" had gone to China for study in 606, stayed for twenty-two years, and was regularly visited by Kamatari after returning home. The second was Eon, a learned Buddhist priest who had returned to Japan in 640 after thirty-two years of study abroad. These two priests had observed and studied the formation of China's centralized bureaucratic structure, based on codifications of penal and administrative law, and had firsthand knowledge of a Chinese empire that exercised remarkable control over affairs in surrounding states and territories. In close association with Kamatari, they made important contributions to the formulation and implementation of Japan's reform program.

The new government immediately dispatched imperial messages to the kings of Koguryŏ and Paekche. The tone of the one to Ko-

48 Kōgyoku 4 (645)/6/12, NKBT 68. 262–3.

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guryŏ – the state with which Japan had had the least contact – was quite friendly: "Past [relations] have been of short duration, but [their] future is unlimited. So we should continue to call on each other in a friendly manner." But criticism and demands can be found in the imperial message to Paekche, the Korean state with which Japan had had the longest and closest association. After explaining that the "tribute" presented by Paekche was being returned because it was insufficient, Paekche ministers were asked to clarify their position as soon as possible.[49] Although earlier contacts with T'ang through Silla had revealed a tilt toward the emerging T'ang–Silla alliance, no message was sent to Silla. Instead, friendliness was expressed toward Koguryŏ and demands were made on Paekche, suggesting that Yamao Yukihisa may be right in concluding that the new government intended to do nothing more than improve relations with the three Korean kingdoms. The decision made toward the end of 645 to move the capital to the port city of Naniwa suggests that the new leader wanted to have their base at the port where diplomatic missions were embarking and disembarking.

The reformers first moved to maintain and strengthen the government's control. An early and particularly significant step was taken when Emperor Kōtoku and his crown prince called a meeting of their new ministers and had them swear an oath of allegiance. Questions have beeen raised about the authenticity of this oath recorded in the *Nihon shoki*, but the first sentence expresses the same theme found in the Seventeen Injunctions of 604: "Just as heaven overspreads and earth upholds, there is only one imperial way."[50] By asking the new ministers to take this oath, the crown prince and Kamatari were not simply adopting a traditional method of cementing loyalty but, rather, were explicitly affirming the principle that an emperor (and his advisers) – not the chieftain of a powerful clan – should rule the state directly. The same note was struck in an imperial edict addressed, about two weeks later, to the two military leaders who had just been appointed ministers of the left and right: "You are to administer the affairs of the empire by strictly obeying Japan's sacred rulers and being faithful to them."[51]

Another early measure taken to increase governmental control was

49 Taika 1 (645)/7/10, NKBT 68.272–3. Both messages were introduced with the following phrase: "This is the mandate of the emperor of Japan who is a manifest kami [*akitsumikami*]," but this conception of Japanese sovereignty probably did not emerge until the time of Temmu.

50 Kōtoku, Introduction (645)/6/19, NKBT 68.270–1.

51 Taika 1 (645)7/12, NKBT 68.272–3.

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aimed at Buddhist temples. During the eighth month of 645 imperial messengers were sent to the "big temple" (probably the Kudara-dera, the building of which was started in 639 and completed in 641) after Jomei's death and in response to an order issued by Empress Kōgyoku. Although enjoying imperial associations, the Kudara-dera was, like other Asuka temples, essentially a clan institution. So when the reformers moved to increase imperial control, they had to concern themselves with ways of downgrading Buddhist temples as symbols of clan power and upgrading them as instruments of imperial rule. First they adopted the T'ang practice of placing ten Buddhist masters in charge of the temple affairs.[52] The ten were, like the state scholars, old China hands. The priest who headed the list is thought to have migrated to Japan from Koguryŏ; another had arrived from south China; a third had studied long in China; and a fourth had been a student of Buddhism in Koguryŏ. None of them seems to have had any direct tie with Paekche, another indication of the new government's preference for T'ang models and teachers.

Priests and laymen were also assigned to posts at certain temples, and imperial messengers were dispatched to report that any temple built by a person holding a position as high as occupational group manager (*tomo no miyatsuko*) could obtain financial assistance from the government. By adopting such measures, the reformers weakened these institutions as symbols of clan power, making them instruments of governmental control and using them for the introduction and absorption of Chinese culture. Although such old temples as the Asuka-dera and the Kudara-dera continued to retain much of their original clan character, after 645 even they were seen as important temples in an increasingly strong state-oriented Buddhist system.

The new government also attempted to keep dissidents from obtaining possession of weapons, especially in outlying regions. When imperial messengers were sent to the eastern provinces in the eighth month of 645, they were instructed not only to establish a system of provincial inspectors (*kuni no mikotomochi*) but also to have all weapons collected, except those in areas near Emishi territory, and deposited in government storehouses.[53] A few weeks later the enforced collection of weapons was extended to the entire country. The government was trying thereby to obstruct any attempt by a discontented clan chieftain to overthrow the government.[54]

52 Taika 1 645/8/8, NKBT 68.276–7. 53 Taika 1 (645)/8/5, NKBT 68.274–5.
54 Taika 1 (645)/8/5 and 7/13, NKBT 68.272–5.

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Another set of orders was aimed at removing sources of popular discontent. The day after the emperor issued an edict demanding that his ministers be faithful, he handed those same ministers another edict requiring them to make sure that the imperial secretaries, provincial inspectors, and other emperor-appointed officials be gentle and considerate in their use of commoners for labor on public projects. Later instructions to provincial inspectors warned them not to violate the judicial prerogatives of local officials, not to go about with an entourage of more than nine attendants, and not to deal directly with the irregularities of local officials, but simply to submit reports after ascertaining the facts. Finally, a Chinese arrangement was adopted for permitting anyone to report complaints that were not properly considered at lower levels.

The new government was only two months old when it ordered a census taken and a land survey made in order to facilitate the collection of revenue from all peoples and lands. These orders were first carried out in the eastern provinces, just after, and in connection with, the dispatch of provincial inspectors. Imperial messengers were also sent to the six districts (*agata*) around the capital and finally to all provinces of the land to make certain that people everywhere had been registered and their land surveyed. In an imperial edict issued in the eleventh month of 645, such endeavors were explained and justified:

> Since ancient times, and in every imperial reign, people and their land have been designated as imperial *be*, and the names of these *be* have been passed on to posterity. In like fashion, clan chieftains with the title of *omi*, *muraji*, occupational group manager, or provincial governor have each set up their own *be*, used those people (*tami*) in willful ways, and divided up the mountains and seas, the woods and plains, and the lakes and fields of the several provinces and districts. Conflict among the clans over these possessions has been incessant. Some chieftains have taken over tens of thousands of *shiro* of rice land, and others lack enough land for a place to insert a needle. When the time comes for paying taxes, these *omi*, *muraji*, and occupational group managers first take their own cut and then divide up or hand over [to officials of the central government] what is left. When building palaces and burial tombs, they force *be* people to perform labor at their personal whim. The Book of Changes says: "Increase the losses for those above and the advantages for those below. In this way property will be undamaged and the people unharmed." But now the people are more destitute than ever because powerful clan chieftains divide up the land, sell it to farmers, and collect yearly tribute. Henceforth the selling of land is forbidden. No one is permitted to become an unauthorized landlord or to increase, by one iota, the miseries of the weak.[55]

55 Taika 1 (646)/11/19, NKBT 68.278–9.

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In addition to taking a census and making a land survey, the new regime was attempting to ensure popular acceptance of its new policies.

The imperial edict issued on the first day of the first month of 646 and referred to here as the Four-Article Edict[56] is comparable to the Five-Article Oath of 1868. Each was issued by an emperor at a time when new leaders had decided to make bold and sweeping political changes – in the name of the current emperor – that would help the country to meet the threat of invasion by foreign powers, at first Chinese and then Western. Unfortunately, the historical significance of the Four-Article Edict has been clouded by questions about its authenticity and by a tortuous and largely undocumented process of implementation. But new evidence and additional study suggests that it was an imperial proclamation that, by outlining the Great Reforms, stood midway between the Seventeen Injunctions of 604 and the Taihō code of 701.

Discovering that the Four-Article Edict contained words and phrases identical with those occurring in later administrative codes, historians have been forced to conclude that the edict could not have been written that early, that it must have been misdated or fabricated. For a time I (Inoue) went along with such scholars as Tsuda Sōkichi who claimed that the edict could not have been written as early as 646. But further reflection led me to realize that (1) steps taken during the first six months of the new administration were in accord with the reforms for which the edict called and that (2) later orders and reports (recorded in the *Nihon shoki*) may be seen as attempts to implement those reforms. I also found that offices and titles in use after the promulgation of the Taihō code in 701 had existed at an earlier date, leading me to conclude that the *Nihon shoki* compilers had revised the edict's wording.

Although this theory has been subjected to considerable criticism, several scholars have published findings that support it. Tanaka Tei's genealogical studies of the Wake clan, for example, show that the first Wake clan chieftain held a rank first established in 649 and occupied the position of district supervisor (*kōri no miyatsuko*), that this man's son and grandson held the same rank and position, and that the Chinese characters used for recording this rank and position were those used in both the edict and the later Taihō code. Moreover, thirty-three wooden blocks (*mokkan*) bearing the characters for "district" were excavated in 1966 at Fujiwara where the imperial capital was located between 694 and 710. On thirty of them the character for "district"

56 Taika 2 (646)/1/1, NKBT 68.280–3.

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was the one in common use before 701, and on the remaining three was the one used in the Taihō code. Such evidence suggests that compilers of the *Nihon shoki*, who completed their work by 720, thus attempted to modernize the phraseology of the Four-Article Edict, squaring it with subsequent codifications of administrative law.

Article 1 of the edict proclaims that the clan possession of people and land be abolished and that the confiscated property (people and land) be used henceforth for sustenance households (*hehito* or *jikifu*) granted to high-ranking officials of the imperial government or for allotments of goods (*fuhaku*) granted to lower-ranking imperial officials. Even the most skeptical scholars generally do not doubt that this article, making up what is referred to as the introductory section, was written during or before 646. It was a logical product of the concept of direct imperial rule expressed in the Seventeen Injunctions of 607 and reiterated in edicts handed down immediately after the reform leaders seized control in 645. Moreover, the idea that direct imperial rule meant direct imperial control of all lands and all peoples was not only reflected in other imperial edicts issued as early as the eighth month of 646 but also lay at the base of later codifications of administrative law. Indeed, Article 1 was the first clear, authoritative statement of the basic (Chinese) idea underlying the revolutionary process by which the old clan order was gradually but surely transformed into a monarchical state administered by officials appointed by, and responsible to, the emperor.

Article 2 proclaimed that the capital was to be divided into four wards headed by able persons, that the home provinces around the capital were to be headed by new-line provincial inspectors (*kuni no mikotomochi*) and divided into districts headed by supervisors who could read and make calculations, and that a system of post stations, barriers, and guards was to be enacted. Clearly, the aim was to establish a local government structure administered by officials of ability who were responsible to the imperial court. The form of the structure was undoubtedly influenced by developments in Korea, as well as by the sixth-century rise of districts (*agata*) headed by supervisors (*agata no nushi*) who served the Yamato kings.[57]

57 In areas outside the home provinces, direct imperial control was established first through districts (*agata*) and district supervisors (*agata nushi*), rather than through provincial supervisors (*kuni mikotomochi*). The creation and use of districts and district supervisors to extend imperial control are revealed in a *Hitachi kuni fudoki* report of 649 that states that parts of two old provinces (headed by a *kuni no miyatsuko*) were made into a district (*kōri*) headed by a district supervisor (*kōri no miyatsuko*). The official who made this change was called a *sōryō*, a new title for an official who was somewhat like a provincial supervisor. The history of the

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Article 3 provided for the registration of households and the survey of land. It stipulated that fifty households were to make up one village (*sato*) with a headman (*osa*) who was to supervise the households within his village, direct the planting of fields and mulberry bushes, prevent and deal with crime, and enforce the payment of produce and service taxes (*etsuki*). As preparation for the land survey, the article stipulated that an area thirty-by-twelve paces would be one *tan*, that ten *tan* would make up one *chō*, and that two sheaves and two bundles of rice should be paid as tax on one *tan* of rice land (about 3 percent of the yield).

Article 4 added details about these taxes, stating first that new produce and service taxes (*etsuki*) were to be created. The new ones were (1) a fixed field tax (*ta no mitsuki*) paid in locally produced cloth (amounts of different types of cloth for each *chō* of land were spelled out); (2) a fixed household tax (*hegoto no mitsuki*) paid in local produce (amount per household stated); (3) a horse tax of one horse for every one hundred households (for every two hundred households if the horse were a good one); (4) a weapons tax of a sword, armor, bow, and arrows for each person; (e) a corvée tax of one worker for every fifty households (in place of the old tax of one for every thirty households); and (f) a "rice lady" (*uneme*) tax of one good-looking sister or daughter for every official of the rank of assistant district supervisor or above (one hundred households were to provide rations for the courtesan who was to be sent to the court with one male and two female attendants, and the amount of cloth and rice that could be paid in lieu of one courtesan was the same as that paid in lieu of one corvée worker).[58]

During the later months of 646 one imperial edict followed another, a series of reminders that the state was now being ruled directly by the emperor. Some edicts reiterated what had been previously proclaimed. In some cases they condemned (or outlawed) improper behavior by officials, and even by husbands and wives. One famous edict issued in the third month of 646 dealt with burials and began with a quotation from an edict once issued by a Chinese emperor:

creation of local government organs responsible to the emperor was therefore paralleled by the emergence of new districts and provinces headed by officials serving the court. Old clan-connected officials were not eliminated, but their power and control were gradually reduced. See Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 322–5.

58 Article 4 of this famous edict says nothing about the allocation of land among individuals or about the collection of taxes on such allotments – prominent features of the Taihō administrative code promulgated in 702. But this does not mean that taxes of this sort were not collected immediately after the Great Reforms of 645. Rather, at this early date, the court was undoubtedly giving primary attention to assessments on produce and services. Other differences are discussed in Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 325–9.

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In ancient times the dead were buried in graves on high ground. Dirt was not piled up, nor were trees planted. Coffins were meant to last only until the body decayed, as were the clothes placed on it. So henceforth I want burial mounds built only on land that cannot be cultivated and in such a way that after a generation has passed, they will not be recognized as graves. No gold, silver, bronze, or iron is to be placed in them; traditional funeral chariots and figures are to be represented in clay; and the joints of the coffin are to be filled with no more than three layers of lacquer. No jewels are to be placed in the mouth of the deceased, and no jeweled jackets or boxes are to be left beside the corpse. These all are vulgar practices.[59]

The Japanese edict did not require the adoption of such ancient Chinese burial practices but did stipulate that the size and contents of mounds be in accord with the deceased's position and rank in the imperial government. For example, a high official could be buried in a square, Chinese-style mound of about the size of Soga no Umako's, the inner stone chamber of which could be no larger than nine-by-five-by-five *shaku*. Somewhat smaller chambers could be built for the burial of a lower-ranking official, but none at all for a commoner. Even the number of days spent on the construction was limited. The edict ended with a ban on the sacrifice of retainers and animals at the time of burial and on the custom by which a eulogist cut his hair or stabbed his thighs before presenting a eulogy. Such measures were meant to make sure that burial mounds – always believed to sanctify the power and authority of the current emperor or chieftain – would show precisely what position and rank the deceased (and his successor) held in the imperial order.

The importance assigned to imperial ranks accounts for the establishment of two new ranking systems, one announced in 647 and the other in 649. Both were made stronger instruments for state building by adding high ranks – probably prized more because of their T'ang flavor – bestowed on ministers who served the emperor directly and loyally.[60] As in other actions taken in these early years of reform the influence of state scholars who had studied and lived many years in T'ang China can be detected.

Although the flow of imperial edicts tells us much about the nature and process of reform during the years after 645, a decision made by the crown prince about two months after the Four-Article Edict was handed down seems to have been particulary significant for the empire-building enterprise. In accordance with this decision, as re-

59 Taika 2 (646)/3/22, NKBT 68.292–3.

60 See Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 314–17; and Richard J. Miller, *Ancient Japanese Nobility, the Kabane Ranking System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974).

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ported in a *Nihon shoki* item for the twenty-second day of the third month of 646, the crown prince (the future Emperor Tenji) turned over eighty-one royal estates (*miyake*) and 524 persons of royal occupational groups (*be*) to the emperor, explaining that just as "Heaven does not have two suns, a country does not have two rulers" and that the emperor should be served by everyone.[61] Probably not many clan chieftains followed the prince's lead, but his action, together with the discovery of burial mounds of precisely the size permitted in the edict on burials, indicates that at least some leaders were obeying the edicts and subjecting themselves to direct imperial rule.

THE IMPERIAL STATE

In 650, when the reform government was about four years old, T'ang China allied itself with the Korean kingdom of Silla. To the Japanese this was a frightening sign of China's intent to dominate the Korean peninsula and possibly Japan as well. This alliance, followed by Chinese military advances, aroused Japan's concerns that shaped governmental policies for decades. The effects can be detected in three massive currents of historical change in these years. The first had a military character and was manifested as resistance against T'ang advances in Korea and, later on, as frantic attempts to strengthen the country's defenses against invasion. The second was an administrative current marked by an extensive use of immigrants and other persons familiar with continental techniques. The third took the form of internal political tension that led to civil war in 672 and the establishment of a regime intent on creating a Chinese-style empire in Japan.

T'ang expansion and Japan's response

The 650 alliance between T'ang and Silla was aimed at Paekche. For T'ang, the difficulties it faced in Paekche were secondary to its drawn-out war with Koguryŏ, and for Silla, trouble with Paekche could not be disentangled from problems with its neighbors, especially Koguryŏ to the northwest and Japan across the Tsushima Straits. In Japan, the implications of the alliance were ominous, leading to a split among the leaders over the issue of whether the country should take immediate military action against Silla or simply strengthen its defenses.

Lines were sharply drawn in 651 when envoys from Silla arrived in

61 Taika 2 (646)/3/22, NKBT 68.292–3.

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Tsukushi dressed like T'ang officials. The Japanese court decided that the mission should be sent home, and the ranking minister of the left (Kose no Tokuda) addressed a memorial to the throne in which he advocated preparations for war:

> If we do not attack Silla now, we will come to regret it. We should assemble a great fleet of ships and deploy them on the seas between Naniwa and Tsukushi. Then we should summon Silla envoys and demand an accounting for offenses their state has committed. [Backed by such a display of force], we should then get what we want.[62]

But no such action was taken. The crown prince and his advisers – many of whom had firsthand knowledge of the situation on the continent – elected instead to strengthen diplomatic ties with the T'ang court.

Within a few months they had dispatched to China a mission divided into two groups taking different routes: the first, made up of 121 persons, proceeded by way of Silla (the northern route), and the second, with 120 aboard, sailed across the East China Sea (the southern route). Both contained several scholars and students, suggesting that the main objective was to obtain more information about the T'ang control techniques and cultural achievements. The second group met with disaster soon after leaving port, and only 5 or 6 persons returned safely. But the first reached its destination and arrived back in Japan during the seventh month of 654, bringing with it several people who were soon to become active and prominent in their country's political and cultural affairs.

Before this group's return in 654, a second mission was sent to the T'ang court. Departing in two ships headed for China by way of Silla, it included officials who had already spent several years in China, including Takamuko no Kuromaro (appointed state scholar by the reform regime) and Buddhist priest E'nichi (the teacher of Kamatari's son). When this mission arrived at the T'ang capital and submitted its gifts and messages, Emperor Kao-tsung greeted it with a statement that included these words: "Your country has close contact with the Korean states of Silla, Koguryŏ, and Paekche. If an urgent situation develops there, you should dispatch an envoy to us and ask for help."[63]

Kao-tsung's statement suggests that political interests, as well cultural ones, had impelled members of Japan's imperial court to send this second mission to T'ang. The *Nihon shoki* says nothing to indicate that the Japanese had heard anything about Chinese plans to send

62 Hakuchi 2(651), NKBT 68.317. 63 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, p. 348.

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military expeditions into Korea, although Emperor Kao-tsung had already decided, in response to a request for assistance from Silla, to send an expeditionary force against Koguryŏ.

Japan's crown prince and ministers must have learned, somehow or other, about the T'ang–Silla alliance and the plans for joint military action against Koguryŏ, for the crown prince decided in 653 to abandon the new imperial palace in the port city of Naniwa and to build a new one in the Asuka region of the Nara plain. Emperor Kōtoku objected, but the crown prince and key ministers of the court withdrew to Asuka anyway. We have no record of why the emperor and the crown prince took different positions on this question. But it would appear that the former did not see too much danger in the foreign situation and that the latter (the future Emperor Tenji) wanted the capital in a place that could be more easily defended against foreign invasion.

Emperor Kōtoku remained on in Naniwa but died a lonely death there a few months later. Although the crown prince was in line for the throne, he apparently preferred to govern as crown prince. Therefore his mother, the former Empress Kōgyoku, was enthroned a second time as Empress Saimei. A new palace was built for her, not in Naniwa but in the safer inland area of Asuka. This was the Futatsuki palace located on the peak of a mountain and surrounded by stone walls, something like the mountain strongholds of Korea. The *Nihon shoki* explains that a new canal had to be dug for the two hundred boats that were used for transporting rocks to the foot of the mountain where the palace's stone walls were being constructed. The heavy demand for labor and materials caused people to say that the "canals have been built by a foolish heart" and to predict that no matter how strong the forts are made, they will eventually fall.[64]

Such popular discontent – possibly aggravated by the crown prince's appeasement policy as well as by his expensive defense projects – was a factor in the Arima incident of 658. Imperial Prince Arima, the eldest son of Emperor Kōtoku by a daughter of the minister of the left, had strong claims to the throne at the time of his father's death in 654. But his hopes were dashed when the crown prince's mother was enthroned as Empress Saimei. The record suggests that Prince Arima was also upset by the miseries of the people and that he was drawn into a plot against the throne by Soga no Akae, a grandson of Soga no Umako and a prominent leader of the defeated Soga clan.

64 Saimei 2 (656), NKBT 68.328–9.

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While Soga no Akae was guarding the Futatsuki palace in the empress's absence, he is said to have told Prince Arima that the current administration had made three serious mistakes. First, it had built huge public storehouses where the wealth of the people was being piled up. Second, it had undertaken to dig long canals on which public revenue was wasted. And third, it had decided to transport large rocks by boat to high places in the mountains.[65] The first complaint pointed directly at the policy of increasing public revenue, but the other two stemmed from the post-653 policy of strengthening defenses against a possible invasion from abroad.

At first such talk convinced the prince that the time for drastic steps had come. But then both the prince and Soga no Akae decided that the situation was not yet ripe for rebellion. At this point Akae leaked the contents of their discussion to government authorities. Prince Arima was then arrested and strangled, and his principal backers were sent into exile. But the chronicles say nothing about punishment for Akae. Indeed, he was soon appointed to a post in distant Tsukushi but, at the beginning of Temmu's reign in 672, became minister of the left. Much remains unclear about the Arima incident of 658, and yet chronicle reports suggest that the burden of constructing defenses against a possible invasion from abroad was arousing discontent.

In 660, two years after the Arima incident, T'ang and Silla made a joint attack on Paekche, the Korean state with which Japan had had particularly close relations ever since Japan lost its Korean territory (colony) of Mimana nearly a century before. T'ang military operations in a region where Japan had always had special interests must have caused hawkish members of the court to feel they had been right, nine years earlier, to see signs of danger in the Silla envoys' coming to Japan dressed in T'ang robes. Until 660 the T'ang–Silla alliance had been directed against Koguryŏ, and joint attacks on Koguryŏ were made as early as 655; but in the third month of 660 Emperor Kao-tsung suddenly decided – ostensibly in response to a plea from Silla for assistance in warding off Paekche invasions of Silla territory – to make a coordinated military attack on Paekche. A force of 100,000 men under the Chinese commander Su Ting-fang assisted by a Silla prince crossed the East China Sea from the Liaotung peninsula, landed on the Paekche coast, and coordinated its attack with a Silla force from the east led by Kim Yusin. At the same time King Muyŏl of Silla placed two of his sons in command of a force of 50,000 that marched

65 Saimei 4 (658)/11/3, NKBT 68.334–5.

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against Paekche from the opposite direction. Within four months the Silla armies, having won a decisive victory against the Paekche troops near the present-day city of Yŏnsan, joined the T'ang armies and captured the capital city of Sabi (Pŭyo). The king of Paekche surrendered and his proud state disappeared.[66]

Emperor Kao-tsung seems to have been fully aware that joint military action against Paekche would upset the Japanese, possibly causing them to rush to Paekche's aid, for he made special efforts to keep the Japanese envoys from hearing about his plans. We know this because a member of the Japanese mission that was then in China included a scholar, Iki no Muraji Hakatoku (later one of the compilers of the Taihō code), who kept a diary. After describing an interview that members of his mission had with Emperor Kao-tsung – during which the emperor asked many questions about the recent Japanese campaigns against the Ainu (written up in the *Nihon shoki*) – Hakatoku wrote that suddenly in the twelfth month of 659, he and other members of the mission were taken into custody and prevented from leaving Ch'ang-an. Charges against them were soon dropped, but the emperor handed down an order stating that because an "eastern campaign" was being waged in the following year, the Japanese visitors would not be permitted to depart. Only in the ninth month of 660, a month or so after Paekche had been destroyed, were the Japanese envoys allowed to depart.[67]

But as soon as the T'ang armies had been withdrawn from Paekche and plans were made for the resumption of the long-standing conflict with Koguryŏ, a restorationist movement developed within Paekche, and its leaders appealed to Japan for help. According to the *Nihon shoki*, the appeal was made by messengers who arrived in Japan during the tenth month of 660, a month after the Japanese envoys to T'ang had been released. The messengers from Paekche asked not only for troops but also for the return of Prince P'ung, a member of the Paekche royal family who had been sent to Japan as a hostage in 631 and whom restoration leaders planned to enthrone as king of a new Paekche.[68]

By the time these messengers had arrived in Japan, Japanese court leaders must have known that they faced a truly threatening situation abroad. They had already received numerous firsthand reports of T'ang power and expansion and must have heard that Paekche had

66 Inoue, *Asuka no chōtei*, pp. 369–71; and Denis Twitchett and Howard J. Wechsler, "Kao-tsung (Reign 649–83) and the Empress Wu: The Inheritor and the Usurper," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, p. 282.

67 Saimei 5 (659)/7/3, NKBT 68.338–41. 68 Saimei 6 (660)/10, NKBT 68.346–7.

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been crushed by a coordinated pincer attack from the T'ang and Silla armies. They undoubtedly feared that Koguryŏ, too, would be eliminated and that Japan itself would soon be threatened by T'ang might. No one at court seems, therefore, to have opposed support for the rebels. (In fact, a decision to provide help may actually have been made before assistance was requested.) Empress Saimei quickly took the uprecedented step of going to Tsukushi in order to assume personal command of the expeditionary force.

The empress and other key members of the court (including the crown prince and Kamatari) left the capital for Tsukushi in the twelfth month of 660, two months after the arrival of the restorationist plea. Meanwhile, the T'ang emperor was making plans for a massive invasion of Koguryŏ. The Paekche leaders undoubtedly made certain that this information was rushed to Japan. Shortly after arriving in Kyushu, the empress received the Japanese envoys who had been prevented from leaving Ch'ang-an. Hakatoko, the scholar member of the mission who had been keeping a diary, wrote about being received by the empress and added, "Everyone here is saying that Japan will soon be faced with Heaven's retribution."[69]

Not long after their meeting, the empress died. Prince Naka no Ōe – Emperor Jomei's son who stood at the head of the triumvirate that pulled off the 645 coup and who had administered state affairs as crown prince under three sovereigns – did not now hesitate to occupy the throne as Emperor Tenji and to expedite the mobilization for war in support of Paekche. By the eighth month of 661, armies had been formed for the expedition, and before another month had passed, Prince P'ung had been returned to Paekche. Probably the first military units were sent to Korea at about that time, although the *Nihon shoki* says that this did not occur until the following year when Prince P'ung was installed as the new king of a restored Paekche. Meanwhile, Emperor Kao-tsung had ordered his troops to invade Koguryŏ from the north, having asked Silla to support the operation with armies and supplies.

Then suddenly during the third month of 662, T'ang forces were withdrawn from Koguryŏ, presumably in order to deal with the Paekche restoration movement that had gained legitimacy from the enthronement of a new king, and aided by Japanese troops and supplies. During the previous several months of 662 the rebels had increased their control over areas around the old Paekche capital, and

69 Saimei 7 (661)/5/23, NKBT 68.350–1.

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for a time they were able to hold out against the armies of Silla and T'ang. But early in 663 Silla's attacks were stepped up, and the Paekche restoration leader (Poksin) was forced to seek further assistance from Japan, presenting some T'ang prisoners as evidence that his armies were putting up a good fight. Japan had already sent thousands of troops, considerable amounts of supplies, and a fleet of 170 ships. In the fifth month of 663, Kao-tsung is said to have mobilized 100,000 soldiers for a campaign against the Paekche recalcitrants and to have ordered Silla's King Munmu to send armies to attack Paekche from the east.

Both T'ang and Korean sources (the *Chiu T'ang-shu* and the *Samguk sagi*) report that Silla troops, accompanied by ships loaded with supplies, moved down the Kŭm River where they joined T'ang forces in the eighth month of 663, that a historic naval battle was fought at the mouth of the Kŭm River, and that four hundred Japanese ships were sunk. The *Nihon shoki* also describes the twenty-seventh day of the eighth month of 663:

> The T'ang again assembled their ships for battle, and in a short time Japanese forces were defeated. Many of our men were thrown into the water and drowned, and our ships were unable to maneuver. Commander Echi no Takatsu prayed to heaven for victory, gnashed his teeth in anger, slew tens of enemy soldiers, and died in battle. It was after this that King P'ung-chang of Paekche, with several retainers, boarded a ship and fled to Koguryŏ.[70]

To this report was added the comment that people were now saying that Paekche no longer existed. Japan, having lost its foothold in the Korean kingdom of Mimana (Kaya) a century before (in 562), was now completely excluded from the Asian continent. The T'ang empire, on the other hand, had made Paekche into a strong base for its attempt to subjugate the entire Korean peninsula. This was a sharp blow to Emperor Tenji and Nakatomi no Kamatari – Japan's famous reformers – that presented new dangers, both abroad and at home.

Before the year had passed, the Chinese commander in charge of the Paekche occupation sent an official, Kuo Wu-ts'ung, to Japan with messages and presents. Already, a puppet king had been set up in the old Paekche capital of Ungjin, and attempts had been made to cement ties between the kings of Paekche and Silla. It is therefore assumed that Kuo-Wu-ts'ung's primary objective was to persuade Japan to recognize occupied Paekche as an integral part of the Chinese empire.

70 Tenchi 2 (663)/8/27, NKBT 68.358–60.

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Because Kuo-ts'ung had not been sent by Emperor Kao-tsung or by the king of an independent Korean state, he was not invited to the Japanese capital or given the royal treatment accorded an official diplomat. Indeed, Kuo and his party never got closer to the capital than Kyushu. But the *Nihon shoki* states that – after the lapse of five months and the receipt of an imperial decree ordering the mission to leave – Kuo received presents from Minister of the Center Nakatomi no Kamatari and was entertained.[71]

The Chinese did their best to encourage Paekche and Silla to become friendly and cooperative components of the T'ang empire. The kings of the two states were first required to meet and take vows of friendship. Then in 665 they were brought together again, this time at Ungjin where they worshiped various deities together and accepted some of each other's blood. Even old border disputes were settled.

During the ninth month of 665, a second mission arrived in Japan from T'ang-controlled Paekche. This one, headed by a high official from the T'ang court and made up of 254 persons, submitted documents with acceptable wording. Consequently, the party was allowed to proceed to the capital where it was properly welcomed. Not long after that, Japan dispatched envoys to the T'ang court, the first sent to China since the collapse of Paekche in 663. So within approximately two years, Japan had reestablished friendly relations with not only Paekche and Silla but T'ang as well.

But in 667 the Japanese view of the foreign scene was again darkened by Emperor Kao-tsung's decision to try, once more, to conquer Koguryŏ, which had successfully checked the military advances of one Chinese emperor after another since the early seventh century. Encouraged by internal dissension within Koguryŏ and the likelihood of substantial military assistance from both Silla and Paekche, T'ang armies crossed Koguryŏ borders in 667 and headed for P'yŏngyang, its capital. These armies had to be withdrawn but were once more sent against Koguryŏ in the following year, after they were placed under the command of a naval officer (Liu Jen-kuei) who had succeeded in repelling Japanese ships at the mouth of the Kŭm River in 663. By the ninth month of 668, the coordinated attacks of T'ang and Silla – not unlike earlier ones against Paekche – brought about the fall of P'yŏngyang and the collapse of Koguryŏ.

In the face of a T'ang takeover, Koguryŏ sent two missions to Japan

71 Tenchi 3 (664)/6/4, NKBT 68.361–2.

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in 667. Their objective, as in the case of the Paekche missions dispatched a few years earlier, was to obtain military assistance. But by this time the Japanese court had lost its taste for military intervention on the Korean peninsula. Moreover, it had now made its peace with the Chinese occupation regime in Paekche and even sent off a mission to the T'ang court. Just before the arrival of the second group of Koguryŏ emissaries, envoys had also entered Japan from Silla, the first since 651 when Japanese officials were upset by Silla officials appearing in Chinese robes. Now the Silla envoys (no doubt dressed as before) were well received, indicating that the Japanese had come to accept both Paekche and Silla as integral parts of the expanding T'ang empire and were not tempted to respond to the Koguryŏ request for military assistance.

Defense measures

The three T'ang invasions of the Korean peninsula during the 660s – the first, joint military action with Silla against Paekche in 660; the second, the destruction of the Japan-supported Paekche restoration in 663; and the third, the subjugation of Koguryŏ in 668 – caused Japanese leaders to become quite frantic about the possibility of a T'ang invasion of Japan. Having noted the attention given to defense in the early 650s, after word had reached the court about a T'ang–Silla alliance, it is not surprising to find that now, following the rout of Japanese naval and ground forces in 663, far more attention was given to the task of strengthening defense.

In the wake of the Kŭm River disaster, the Japanese moved immediately to build forts on Tsushima and Iki (islands located between the southern tip of Korea and Kyushu) and at strategic places in northeastern Kyushu. Along this fortified line were installed watertowers by which information on enemy movements could be quickly transmitted. The military headquarters were established at Dazai-fu, high in the mountains behind Hakata Bay. Dazai-fu was in turn protected by forts constructed on peaks to the north and the south, as well as by what was called a water fortress (*mizuki*) built along the Mikasa River that flowed from Dazai-fu to Hakata Bay. The *Nihon shoki* merely tells us that the water fortress, constructed in 664, had high embankments for the storage of water. The remains of eastern and western gates reveal the fortress's original location and size. Some historians theorize that the water fortress was essentially a reservoir from which water could be released against approaching enemy soldiers, but others won-

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der whether it was meant to supply water for the moats of neighboring strongholds. Remains of mountain forts built to the north and south of Dazai-fu indicated the presence of stone walls within which fairly large structures (with stone foundations) had been built, probably for the storage of weapons and food.

After 667 when the T'ang had begun to organize joint military action against Koguryŏ and the Japanese had become more disturbed than ever about a possible T'ang invasion of their country, preparations to defend Japan became fevered. On the island of Tsushima, for example, a stone wall 6 meters high and 2,370 meters long was erected. In addition, new forts were constructed at strategic positions along the Inland Sea, for Japanese leaders now feared that enemy forces (T'ang or Silla) might make a successful landing in Kyushu and advance up the Inland Sea toward the capital. Assuming that enemy soldiers might force their way past the Nagato fort at the western entrance to the Inland Sea, they erected another major fort in 667 at Yashima on a 300-meter-high promontory to the west of the Takamatsu harbor where the Inland Sea approach to the capital could be better guarded. In that same year the Takayasu fort was erected on a mountain near the capital, at a position from which defenders could watch for an enemy advance on the capital from the Inland Sea.[72] But at none of these defense works – earthen or stone forts, watchtowers, armories, or water fortresses – do we find evidence of techniques not known in Korea, suggesting that here (as in many other areas) Japan was benefiting from an extensive use of skilled refugees from Paekche.

Korean expertise

References in the *Nihon shoki* to Korean migrations to Japan after the T'ang invasions of Korea in the 660s, together with evidence of a concurrent spread of Korean styles and methods in whatever the Japanese were making and doing point to a substantial influx of Korean artisans, builders, administrators, and various specialists: persons with continental know-how whose services could be used to strengthen the state, increase its revenues, and tighten its control. Chronicle references to such migrations provide evidence of two distinct waves: one from Paekche after its demise in 663 and another from Koguryŏ after it had been eliminated in 668 (see Map 3.1).

The first extant account of the arrival of refugees from Paekche

72 Inoue, *Asuka no chôtei*, pp. 395–8.

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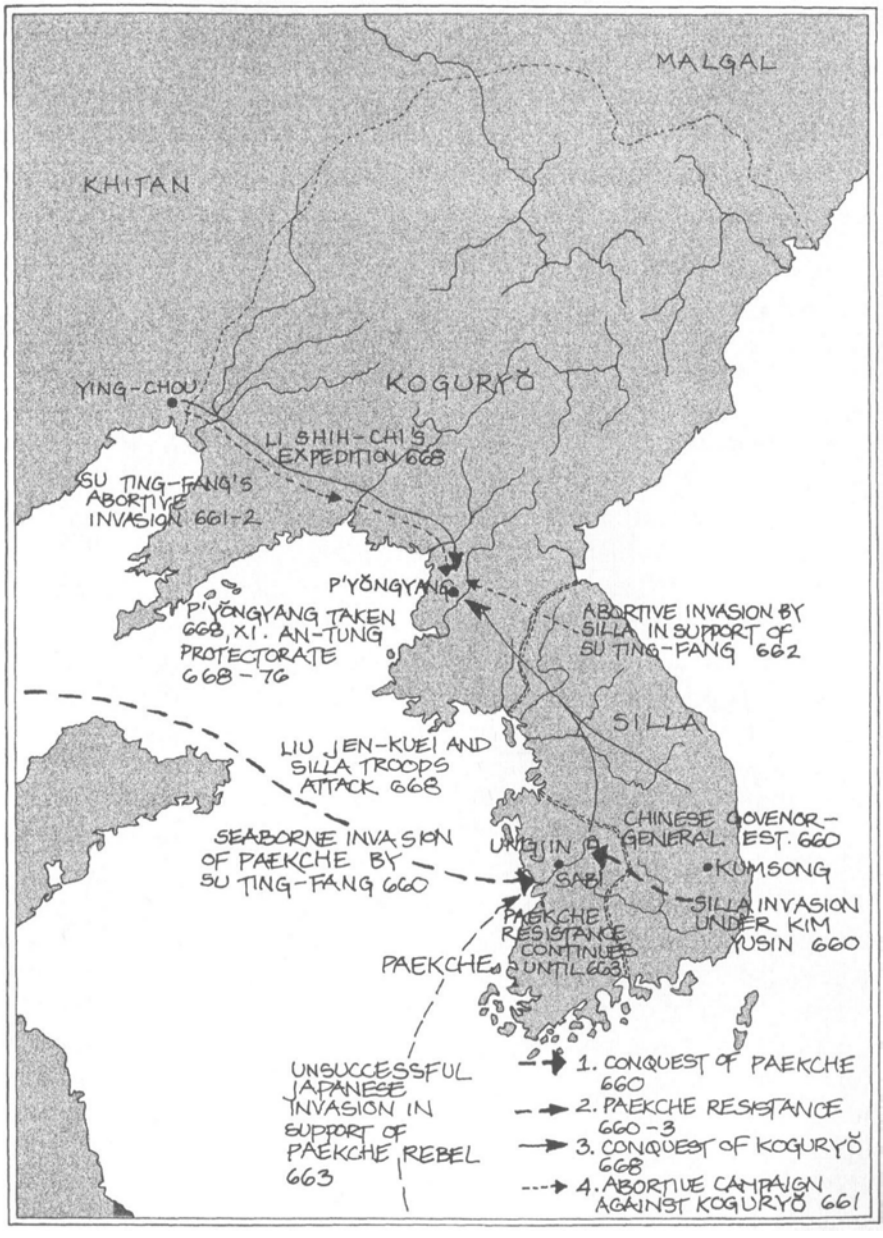
MALGAL
KHITAN
KOGURYŎ
YING-CHOU
LI SHIH-CHI'S EXPEDITION 668
SU TING-FANG'S ABORTIVE INVASION 661-2
P'YŎNGYANG
P'YŎNGYANG TAKEN 668, XI. AN-TUNG PROTECTORATE 668-76
ABORTIVE INVASION BY SILLA IN SUPPORT OF SU TING-FANG 662
SILLA
LIU JEN-KUEI AND SILLA TROOPS ATTACK 668
SEABORNE INVASION OF PAEKCHE BY SU TING-FANG 660
CHINESE GOVENOR-GENERAL EST. 660
KUMSONG
SABI
SILLA INVASION UNDER KIM YUSIN 660
PAEKCHE RESISTANCE CONTINUED UNTIL 663
PAEKCHE
UNSUCCESSFUL JAPANESE INVASION IN SUPPORT OF PAEKCHE REBEL 663
1. CONQUEST OF PAEKCHE 660
2. PAEKCHE RESISTANCE 660-3
3. CONQUEST OF KOGURYŎ 668
4. ABORTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST KOGURYŎ 661

Map 3.1 Fall of Paekche and Koguryŏ. (From Denis Twitchett, ed., *Sui and Tang China 589–906, Part I*, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of China*, Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 283.)

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appears in a 665 report that one high-placed Paekche refugee was granted court rank in Japan and four hundred Paekche commoners were settled in the province of Ōmi, probably at a place where the government was opening up some new land for the cultivation of rice. Then an item for the following year mentions that two thousand more men and women from Paekche were settled in provinces to the east and that the government had agreed to cover their living costs for a period of three years. Finally, a 669 chronicle entry states that two former Paekche ministers of state (including a man who was later granted court rank) arrived in Japan with more than seven hundred Paekche men and women who were subsequently settled in the Kamō District of Ōmi Province. All these Koreans arrived in what may be called the post-663 Paekche wave.

The second wave was made up of persons who fled from Koguryŏ to Japan after 668, when their country was forced into the T'ang empire. Some migrations of this type were deemed sufficiently important for inclusion in the contemporary official chronicle, but only some years later. The first second-wave entry was for the year 687, stating that 56 persons from Koguryŏ were then settled in the province of Hitachi. The second one (dated 716) reports that 1,799 more were placed in Suruga (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture) as well as in other provinces to the east.[73] The lateness of the reports on Koguryŏ arrivals suggests that members of this post-668 wave were motivated by reports of opportunities in Japan.

Many immigrants, whether from Paekche or Koguryŏ, were members of the elite who had lost, or felt they might lose, their positions under T'ang rule and who knew that their skills and education would be appreciated in Japan. Convincing support for this conclusion is provided by a *Nihon shoki* report for the year 671 that as many as seventy Paekche officials were awarded Japanese court rank.[74] At the top of the list stood two Paekche officials on whom was bestowed the fourth rank junior grade. One of these, Satthek Syo-Myong, was referred to as a vice-minister of justice, a man who was one of the six officials assigned to the department set up for compiling the Ōmi administrative code. (According to the *Kaden*, he was also selected because of his literary distinction to write the epitaph for Nakatomi no Kamatari who died in 669.) The third Paekche official on the list, Kwisil Chip-Sa, was awarded the fifth rank junior grade and was

73 Ibid., pp. 399–400. 74 Tenchi 10 (671)/1, NKBT 68.376–7.

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referred to as the head of the department of education, probably chief of the University Bureau (Daigakuryō) set up at about that time. Six others were awarded the sixth rank junior grade: Four were specialists in military science and two in medicine. More than fifty were granted the seventh rank junior grade, including two more medical men, a person familiar with the Confucian Classics, a devotee of yin–yang (*on'yō*) philosophy, and fifty or so followers of a high-ranking specialist in military science. The various fields in which these immigrants specialized, as well as the high ranks they received, leave little doubt that the Japanese court was determined, at this time of increasing anxiety about T'ang advances in the direction of Japan, to make extensive use of Korean experts for an accelerated and wide-ranging program of modernization.

State control

The introduction of advanced foreign methods and techniques was probably most evident in the military field, but the Tenji court was also adopting other continental methods for increasing state control. As early as 664, just a few months after Japan's humiliating defeat in Korea, Emperor Tenji ordered his younger brother (Crown Prince Ōama, who was to become Emperor Temmu) (1) to revise and increase the number of court ranks; (2) to appoint the heads of clans and award large swords to the strongest, small swords to the less strong, and shields and bows to those who were also occupational group managers; and (3) to appoint occupational group heads as *kakibe* and *yakabe*.[75]

A chronicle statement that this order was carried out in 671,[76] seven years later, has led some historians to believe that it was not handed down until 671. But a study of the wording and contents of the two references makes us think that seven years might have been required to align appointments with appropriate stipends and ranks and that the 664 order was part of an ambitious attempt to use continental models and experts for erecting a strong, hierarchical system of state control.

The fact that Tenji's order was implemented in 671, the very year that so many Paekche officials were awarded high ranks for services rendered in special fields of knowledge, suggests that this was one aspect of a multidirectional drive to construct a tighter, continental-style administrative system. Two other political developments between 667 (when

75 Tenchi 3 (664)/2/9, NKBT 68.360–1. 76 Tenchi 10 (671)/1/6, NKBT 68.376–7.

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T'ang was pressing Silla to join it in military operations against Koguryŏ) and 672 (when civil war broke out in Japan) make these years an important turning point in Japanese history: (1) the removal of the capital of Ōtsu in the province of Ōmi during the third month of 667 and (2) the formal enthronement of Tenji as emperor in the first month of 668. These two events, as well as the new administrative arrangements and the granting of court rank to Paekche refugees, are seen as by-products of the current preoccupation with danger from abroad.

Tenji's decision to have his palace built outside the Nara plain, on a narrow strip of land between mountains and the southwestern shore of Lake Biwa, has been considered by some historians as a step required by the rise of increasingly strong feeling of discontent among important clans in the Asuka region, where the previous imperial palace had been located. But we think of this decision, made immediately after the T'ang and Silla moves against Koguryŏ were reported, as an extension of the crash program to fortify strategic points along the Inland Sea and on mountains overlooking the plain that lay between the Inland Sea and the Asuka capital. For defensive purposes, the new Ōtsu capital had two advantages: It was quite far from Naniwa shores where enemy forces might land, and it was convenient for overland communication with the eastern and northern provinces from which crucial military support might be obtained.

Likewise, the long delay in holding Tenji's enthronement ceremony, coming after he had already ruled for six years, can be thought of as resulting from a desire to avoid unnecessary expenditures of time and resources while extraordinary steps were being taken to strengthen the country's defenses against a possible invasion. Scheduling the enthronement ceremony in 668, after a new imperial palace had been built and occupied, was probably considered useful for affirming and sanctifying imperial authority in the face of critical danger, both at home and abroad.

One other significant event before 672 was the handing down of the imperial order in 668 that administrative laws (*ryō*) be compiled. Because no such compilation is now extant and no mention of such an order can be found in the *Nihon shoki*, readers may be a bit uneasy about concluding that Tenji actually took such action. Nonetheless, historical evidence for this conclusion has been discovered in the following items, and in the way they reinforce one another:

1. A statement in the *kaden* (the first volume of which was thought to have been compiled between 760 and 764 by Kamatari's second son)

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reveals that (a) in 668 Emperor Tenji ordered Kamatari to compile ceremonial regulations (*reigi*) and a code of law (*ritsuryō*), (b) Kamatari was selected to head the compilation because he was considered the leading intellectual of the day and was familiar with ancient writings, and (c) articles (*jōrei*) for such a code were actually written.

2. An item in the introduction to the *Kōnin kyakushiki* (amendments to penal and administrative law compiled in 820) stating that a twenty-two-volume administrative code was compiled in 668.
3. A *Nihon shoki* report that Emperor Tenji adopted ceremonial regulations (*reigi*) in 670.
4. A *Nihon shoki* item stating that the crown prince was appointed chancellor (*daijō daijin*) and that other persons were named minister of the left, minister of the right, and senior counselor (*gyoshi daibu*) on the fifth day of the first month of 671.
5. A *Nihon shoki* announcement that "cap ranks" (*kōburi no kurai*) and laws (*nori*) were promulgated on the following day.
6. A *Nihon shoki* item that states that Emperor Temmu called imperial princes and ministers into the Great Hall of State (Daigokuden) on the twenty-fifth day of the second month of 681 and said: "We want to have the penal and administrative [*ritsuryō*] codes and laws revised. Work together in getting this done. But if you become too deeply involved in such work, state affairs will suffer. Therefore the work should be divided among you."[77]

The most detailed evidence is in Item 1. But standing alone it does not carry much weight because the first volume of the *Kaden* was probably not written until a century later. And yet by comparing the contents of this history with what is in the *Nihon shoki*, it seems that although the compilers of both had access to many of the the same sources, the author of the *Kaden* had some additional ones. Moreover, Item 1 states that Kamatari was asked to compile ceremonial regulations (*reigi*) and a code of law, both of which appeared in Chinese formulations. The compilers of Item 2 had no reason to fabricate the statement that a code had been compiled in 668. To be sure, the *Nihon shoki* does not record that Tenji ordered the formulation of a law code, but Item 3 states that ceremonial regulations were promulgated in 670. Items 4 and 5 would make more sense if a code had been assembled before 671. Finally, the use of the word *revised* in item 6 indicates that a code was already in existence, and according to Chinese tradition this code

77 Temmu 10 (681)/2/25, NKBT 68.444–5.

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would have been the one compiled at the beginning of the previous Tenji reign.

When taking an overall view of events in these last years of Tenji's reign, between the coronation of 668 and the emperor's death in 672, we can detect unmistakable signs of two parallel historical movements: an increasingly intense and multifaceted effort to strengthen the nation's defenses against the possibility that T'ang and its ally Silla might move to destroy Japan, just as they had destroyed Paekche in 663 and Koguryŏ in 668, and a rather feverish drive to strengthen the state by creating a continental-style control system backed by the formulation and implementation of an administrative law code. Both movements were affected by a growing fear of foreign invasion and by the realization that T'ang (as well as the subjugated Korean kingdoms of Paekche and Koguryŏ) had control mechanisms that were far more advanced than those of Japan.

The civil war of 672

The origins of the conflict that erupted into civil war during the year 672 – thereby propelling a new set of leaders into positions of power – can be traced back to the discontent aroused by Emperor Tenji's efforts to build an extensive defense system and to the Arima incident of 658. (See Map 3.2.) Old clan rivalries, often highlighted by attempts of Soga leaders to recapture the positions of control they had once enjoyed, were in evidence at every successive stage of disruption. But the discontent and rivalry did not break out into civil war until powerful groups became divided over the question of who should be the next emperor.

Tenji and his court had decided in 664 that he should be succeeded by his younger brother Prince Ōama, who was then appointed crown prince and later became Emperor Temmu. But before his formal enthronement in 668, Tenji apparently had a change of mind, coming to prefer Prince Ōtomo, his favorite son by a beloved courtesan. Perhaps it was Tenji's change of heart that caused his younger brother, the crown prince and the future Emperor Temmu, to create a scene at a party given in the new Ōtsu palace during 668, by suddenly seizing a spear and ramming it into the floor. The *Kaden*'s account of the incident states that only the intervention by Kamatari prevented further violence.[78]

78 According to this Fujiwara account, Emperor Temmu was thenceforth indebted to Fujiwara no Kamatari. The compiler of the first volume, a grandson of Kamatari, was implying that Kamatari's death in 669 had unfortunately removed that great man's stabilizing leadership, just when the discord between Tenji and Temmu was erupting into open conflict.

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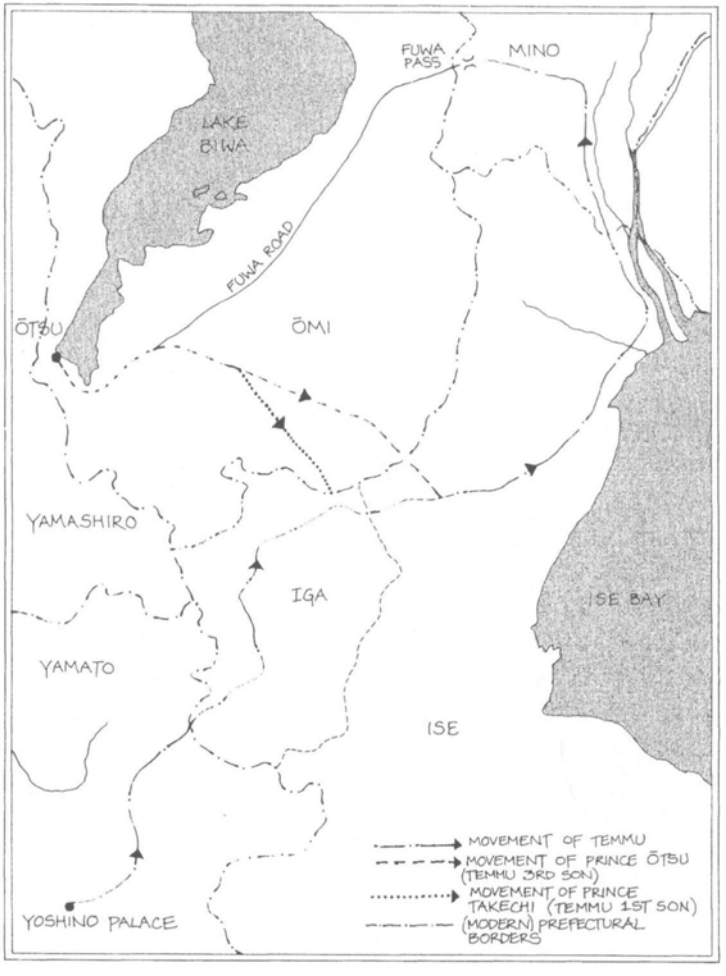

Map 3.2 Troop movements in the civil war of 672. (Based on Inoue Mitsusada, *Asuka no chōtei*, 1974, p. 430.)

For the next three years discord between the two brothers (Emperor Tenji and the future Emperor Temmu) did not result in an open break. But in 671, two years after Kamatari's death, Tenji revealed his true intentions when making ministerial appointments in accordance with the new administrative arrangements. To no one's surprise he appointed Soga no Akae (prominent in the Arima incident of 658) as minister of the left and Nakatomi no Kane (a brother of Kamatari) as minister of the right. But to the crown prince's chagrin he named Prince Ōtomo (his favorite son) to the office of chancellor, the highest

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ministerial post of all. The prince knew that under the terms of the new administrative code, a chancellor had to be an imperial son acting as regent (*sesshō*) for the emperor. So this appointment left little doubt that Tenji was planning on being succeeded by Prince Ōtomo, not by the crown prince.

In the tenth month of that same year, Emperor Tenji became ill and, according to the *Nihon shoki*, called the crown prince to his bedside and told him: "All matters are henceforth to be left in your hands." But the crown prince is said to have demurred on grounds of ill health and to have recommended that state affairs be handed over to the empress consort and to Prince Ōtomo. Finally, he is reported also to have asked for permission to seclude himself in the Yoshino Mountains in order to devote himself to Buddhism. Tenji apparently agreed to both requests, whereupon the crown prince, accompanied by attendants and immediate members of his family, left the capital. A later entry in the *Nihon shoki* states that the crown prince had been advised, in advance of the meeting, to be very careful about what he said in the emperor's presence, suggesting that neither he nor the emperor was saying precisely what he thought or wanted.[79]

A few days before the emperor's death, Prince Ōtomo and the leading ministers of state vowed, in front of a Buddha figure, to obey the emperor's commands, which presumably included the command that Ōtomo, and not the crown prince, be enthroned as the next emperor. Although the *Nihon shoki* presents the official view that the Temmu reign began as soon as the Tenji one ended, it also shows that ten months (including two months of military combat) passed before Temmu was able to return to the capital and take up the reins of government. Consequently, the chronicle's coverage for these months has a strange cast: It treats the ultimately successful prince (Temmu) as the emperor (*tennō*) who is fighting a just cause from outside the Ōtsu capital, whereas it refers to the ultimately unsuccessful prince (Ōtomo) and his supporters as persons "at the capital" (*miyako*).

Scholars have long studied the available evidence to determine who really was emperor before Temmu's military victory in the tenth month of 672. The Mito historians who compiled the *Dai Nihon shi* between 1657 and 1906 decided that Prince Ōtomo had been enthroned and that he was therefore the emperor of Japan during this ten-month period. Later, a famous early modern historian, Ban Nobutomo (1775–1846), took the same position. And then in 1870

79 Tenchi 10 (671)/10/17 and Temmu, Introduction (671), NKBT 68.378–9, 382–3.

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Prince Ōtomo was posthumously named Emperor Kōbun. So the imperial chronologies now list Kōbun's reign before Temmu's. But we still have no proof that Prince Ōtomo was ever actually enthroned. Some historians believe that Tenji's empress consort was placed on the throne without being formally enthroned and that Prince Ōtomo, as the heir designate, handled state affairs in her behalf, just as Temmu had recommended. But possibly no one occupied the throne during those disturbed months, in which case Ōtomo would still have handled state affairs as chancellor.

The outbreak of war came in the sixth month of 672 when according to the *Nihon shoki,* Temmu issued the following order:

> We hear that ministers at the Ōmi court are plotting against us. The three of you are therefore to proceed immediately to the province of Mino and to report to Ō no Omi Homuji, who is in charge of my Yuno estate in the district of Ahachima. Tell him the main points of our strategy and have him first mobilize troops in his district and then get in touch with the provincial governors and have them mobilize armies and immediately block the Fuwa road [to the capital]. We are starting now.[80]

This first order, as well as later information about the support provided (or withheld) by clan chieftains in various parts of the country, indicates that the key question was which side could obtain the backing of leaders in Japan's eastern and northern provinces. By heading off across the mountains to the eastern provinces of Iga and Ise, Temmu and his sons were moving quickly and directly to obtain support from regions to the east and north. Word was soon received that the Fuwa road had been successfully cut, but Temmu still had difficulty, as only small bands of soldiers came to his support. (See Map 3.2.)

But Temmu's prospects for success suddenly brightened when the governor of Ise Province sent five hundred soldiers to close the Suzuka pass by which Temmu might be pursued from the capital. Then the governors of other eastern provinces (Owari and Mino and possibly Shinano and Kai) joined up, enabling Temmu to move from defense to offense at the beginning of the seventh month. Meanwhile, Prince Ōtomo, realizing that Temmu had cut his lines to the east and north and was obtaining support from leaders in those regions, set out to obtain military forces from areas in the west and south. But the governors of Kibi and Tsukushi refused to cooperate, possibly because they saw no chance of defeating Temmu and his backers from the north and

80 Temmu 1 (672)/6/22, NKBT 68.386–7.

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east. But the excuse given by the governor of Tsukushi, as recorded in the *Nihon shoki,* is instructive:

> From the beginning, the province of Tsukushi has provided protection against external trouble. Did we build lofty battlements overlooking the sea and surrounded by deep moats in order to cope with internal trouble? If we were now to hold ourselves in awe of the prince's command and mobilize troops, the province would be left unprotected. And then if the expected foreign trouble should suddenly materialize, the state would soon be overturned.[81]

So even at this time of internal strife, the situation abroad could not be overlooked.

The final thrust against the capital was made by two of Temmu's armies: one crossing the mountains into Yamato from Ise and the other advancing down the Fuwa road toward the capital. In about three weeks both armies had won decisive victories. At that point Prince Ōtomo committed suicide; his minister of the right was executed; other high officials and their heirs were sent into exile; and Temmu, now truly the emperor, moved into the new palace (the Asuka Kiyōmihara) in Yamato. From an entirely different power base, Temmu and his supporters now moved the course of history in a new direction: toward the development of an imperium known as the Nara state, the subject of Chapter 4.

81 Temmu 1 (672)/6/26, NKBT 68.391–3.

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CHAPTER 4

THE NARA STATE

This chapter will be devoted to the remarkable century that began with the civil war of 672 (*jinshin no ran*) and ended with the removal of the capital from Nara in 784. In these years the occupants of the throne, while attempting to rule directly in the Chinese manner, gradually shifted their attention from military preparation to (1) the development of religious rites and institutions, both Shinto and Buddhist, that would enhance the sacral side of their authority; (2) the building of T'ang-style capitals that would sanctify and legitimize their rule over the emerging Japanese state; and (3) the establishment of a bureaucratic system (like the one in T'ang China) that would increase state control over all lands and peoples. The Ise Grand Shrine where the ancestral kami of the Imperial clan is worshiped, as well as the Tōdai-ji where the universal Buddha continues to be honored as the central object of worship, stand as lasting monuments to the religious activity of emperors and empresses who ruled first from Fujiwara and then Nara. The remains of political centers throughout the country have come down to us as concrete evidence of ambitious capital-building projects centered on Nara, thereby justifying the practice of referring to the years between 710 and 784 as the Nara period. Finally, what we know of the Taihō administrative code (modeled after Chinese codes) indicates that the formulation and implementation of law were basic to the rise of Nara's bureaucratic state, leading a number of scholars to characterize the period as the time of a "penal and administrative legal" (*ritsuryō*) order.

Although all these activities – military, religious, political, and legal – were carried out concurrently, historians detect three distinct waves of change. The first, beginning with Emperor Temmu's victory in the civil war of 672 and ending with the drafting of the Yōrō code in 718, saw the laying of the foundation for a strong and centralized imperium. The second, starting with the completion of the splendid Nara capital in 710 and ending with the dedication of the imposing statue of the Rushana Buddha in 752, was marked by the erection of

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spectacular symbols of imperial authority. The third, dating roughly from the Fujiwara no Hirotsugu rebellion of 740 and continuing to the removal of the capital from Nara in 784, witnessed a continuing erosion of imperial control.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Before considering what Emperor Temmu (d. 686) and his successors did to increase the strength and unity of Japan's imperial state, let us look at contemporary political conditions.

The external and internal situation

Long before Temmu had reached the throne by winning the civil war of 672, he had become well aware of threatening developments abroad. In 663, when a Japanese naval force of some four hundred ships was roundly defeated in Korean waters by the combined might of T'ang and Silla, Temmu was thirty-three years old. As crown prince and younger brother of the reigning emperor, he would have been privy to reports received in 668 that the Korean state of Koguryŏ had been incorporated into the T'ang empire. Like other persons at court, he was undoubtedly disturbed by signs of T'ang's westward expansion and shocked to hear in 671, just before the outbreak of civil war, that a huge T'ang mission was on its way to Japan. He and other officials learned of this mission from a report dispatched by the governor of Tsukushi stating that

> six hundred T'ang envoys headed by Kuo ts'ung and escorted by Minister of the Left Sen-teung of Paekche with fourteen hundred men – a mission of two thousand persons transported in forty-seven ships – have arrived at the island of Hichishima. The envoys are afraid that because the number of their men and ships is large, an unannounced arrival will alarm the Japanese guards and cause them to start fighting. Consequently, Dōku and [three] others are being sent to give advance notice that the mission intends to proceed to the imperial court.[1]

Probably only six hundred members of the mission were Chinese (the other fourteen hundred were apparently Japanese prisoners captured in 663), but the approach of such a large mission at this particular time must have created consternation at the Ōmi court and at Temmu's

1 *Nihon shoki* Tenji 10 (671) 11/10, Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 68, p. 379.

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residence in the Yoshino Mountains. But apparently the mission's objective was merely to obtain Japanese assistance for the Chinese occupational base in Paekche, which was then facing rebellion in Paekche and aggressive action by the neighboring kingdom of Silla.[2]

In 672, while Temmu was winning decisive military victories within Japan and assuming the duties of emperor, an even more threatening situation emerged in Korea. After hearing earlier reports of the collapse of Paekche and Koguryŏ, Japanese leaders were confronted with an alliance between T'ang China and Silla. Then as Japan's civil war was coming to a close, word was received that Silla, Japan's old enemy, was breaking its ties with T'ang and moving to seize control of the entire Korean peninsula. The first sign of Silla's ambitions surfaced when its leaders sent troops to the support of Koguryŏ rebels. But in 673 the break became open and irreversible as Silla armies captured a Paekche fort and seized the surrounding territory. T'ang was, of course, angered by such action and made plans in 674 for retaliation, but war was avoided when the Silla king apologized. Nonetheless, the king and his generals appeared to be more determined than ever to make Silla the dominant state of Korea.

By 676 Silla had extended its control over so much of Korea that China was forced to move its occupation headquarters from P'yŏngyang to a safer place in Liao-tung and to recall its officials from Koguryŏ, thereby leaving Silla with hegemony over all territory south of the Taedong River. In 678 the Chinese talked again of invading Silla but did not because more urgent problems had arisen at other points along the empire's outer rim. Therefore, in the years of Temmu's reign, Japan was faced with a different but nevertheless serious threat: a powerful Silla – traditionally hostile to Japan – that had expanded its authority to all but the northern reaches of Korea by driving back the mighty T'ang.

This foreign threat made Temmu and his court painfully aware of internal divisions and disunity, arousing in him and his court a determination to unify and strengthen the state as quickly as possible. In planning new reforms and pressing for the implementation of old ones, they still followed Chinese models. But a study of the measures taken after 672 suggests that Japanese planners were also influenced

2 Because the Chinese mission was still in Tsukushi at the time of Tenji's death, court messengers were sent there to report his death. The *Nihon shoki* states that the Chinese envoy sent a message of condolence to the court. We do not know the contents of the message. Because fairly large amounts of cloth were sent as gifts to the envoy, we can assume that material assistance had been requested; Temmu 1 (672) 3/18, 3/21, and 5/12, NKBT 68.384–5.

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by the weaknesses of the two defeated Korean states (Paekche and Koguryŏ), as well as by the strengths of the victorious Silla.

When comparing Japan's organizational arrangements with those of the Korean states, Temmu and his ministers must have noted that Paekche and Koguryŏ had been plagued by disunity and dissension, which seemed to account for their subjugation by Chinese armies. And when looking at the state system of the victorious Silla, Japanese leaders undoubtedly saw that its kingly control was firmly rooted in a ministerial support reinforced by the principle of harmonious discussion (*wahaku*). Whereas the king of Paekche stood well above and apart from his ministers and the Koguryŏ king's position was largely nominal, the ruler of Silla headed a political order that seemed to be a product of ruling-class will. Therefore when Temmu began to build what has been called Japan's imperial system (*tennō-sei*), he and his advisers gave special attention to Silla's ritual mode of control as well as to Chinese conceptions of sovereignty.

Faced with foreign danger, internal disunity, and continental modes of rule, the Temmu court made three overlapping policy decisions: to build a military force in which all clans were under imperial control, to place the land and people of the country under the priestly rule of the emperor, and to fashion an administrative order along Chinese lines. The implementation of the first policy made Japan look something like a clan-based military state; the second gave it a theocratic character; and the third produced a Chinese-style political order.

Clan control

Temmu's plans for defense were broader and deeper than those of his predecessor Tenji, as he envisaged a unified military force. His early moves included the formation of imperial armies in outlying regions as well as in and around the capital. Then came efforts to convert every clan chieftain into a strong and loyal military commander. Local officials were assigned greater responsibility over military affairs, and highways were improved in order to increase troop mobility. Thus Hayakawa Shōhachi concluded that Temmu's imperial system had a strong military base.[3] But the base was definitely shaped by clan power and clan interests.

Having recently ascended the throne with the support of clans that were discontented with the previous regime – clans that felt their tradi-

3 Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, vol. 4 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1974), pp. 32–37.

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tional interests and customs had been compromised[4] – Temmu was determined to bring all these groups under his control, to force them to abandon their private possessions of land and people, and to award to clan chieftains positions and ranks commensurate with their loyal service to the imperial state.

Reforms before 672 had been carried out by powerful chieftains who served as minister of the left and minister of the right, but Emperor Temmu left these posts vacant and appointed a member of his own branch of the imperial clan to the new position of counselor (*nagon*). Although a counselor had ranked below a minister in the recently created bureaucratic order, under Temmu a counselor was more like a private secretary to the emperor.[5] Other members of Temmu's branch of the imperial clan were given posts of great responsibility: Temmu's consort Princess Uno (later Empress Jitō) became a key adviser; her son Prince Kusakabe, after being named heir apparent in 681, assisted the emperor; and another imperial son, Prince Ōtsu, received important assignments in 683.[6] Thus the most influential persons at the Temmu court were not chieftains of nonimperial clans but members of Temmu's branch of the imperial clan, leading scholars to think of the Temmu reign as one dominated by imperial relatives (see Figure 4.1).

Although the heads of strong clans were not prominent at court after the civil war of 672, they were by no means ignored. Indeed, care was taken to recognizing their status in the imperial system. A law of 682 stipulated that when considering the promotion of an official, special attention be given not only to his service record but also to the status of his clan. Then in 684 Temmu superimposed a new title (*kabane*) system on the old, establishing eight titles to be awarded to clan chieftains in accordance with their standing in the emerging imperial system. The top four titles were new. The first (*mahito*) was to be held only by members of the imperial clan; the second (*asomi*) by clan chieftains with blood ties to the imperial clan; and the third and fourth (*sukune* and *imiki*) by chieftains of loyal nonimperial clans. The remaining four (*michi no shi, omi, muraji,* and *inaki*) were old titles to be awarded only to chieftains of nonimperial clans.[7]

4 Yoshie Akio, *Rekishi no akebono kara dentō shakai no seijuku e: Genshi, kodai, chūsei,* vol. 1 of *Nihon tsūshi* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1986), p. 123.

5 Hayakawa Shōhachi, "Ritsuryō daijōkan-sei no seiritsu," in Sakamoto Tarō hakushi koki kinenkai, ed., *Zoku Nihon kodaishi ronshū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 552–60.

6 Prince Ōtsu's mother was Princess Ōta, a Tenji daughter who died in 667.

7 Richard J. Miller, *Ancient Japanese Nobility: The Kabane Ranking System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 52–58.

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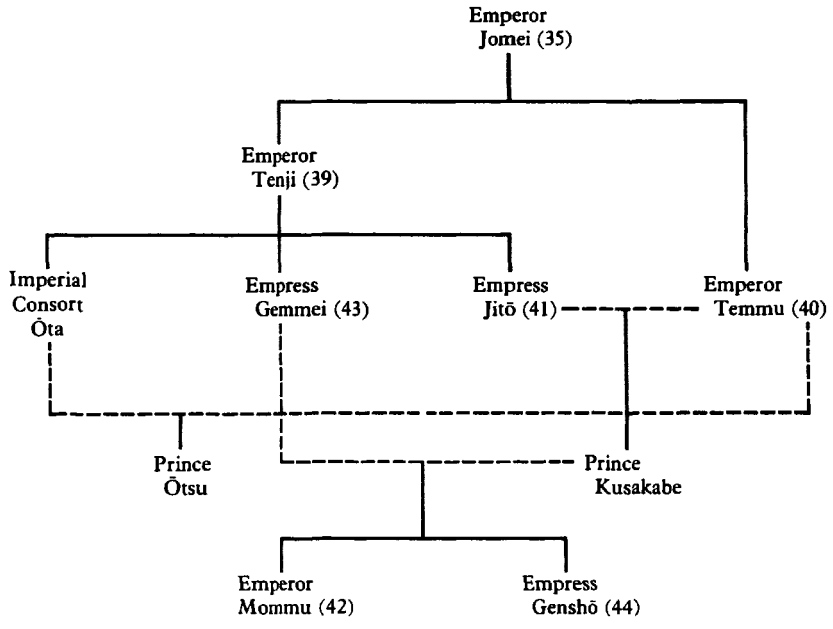

Figure 4.1. Government by imperial relatives. Dashed line indicates spousal relationship; solid line, offspring. (Reign numbers are in parentheses, as recorded in the *Gukanshō* chronology; see Brown and Ishida, trans., *The Future and the Past,* pp. 264–78.)

As Richard Miller showed in his analysis of the title system, the highest new titles were set aside for clan chieftains who had supported Temmu during the civil war of 672. The Nakatomi clan, for example, received preferential treatment. Originally holding the old title of *muraji,* it was granted (after 672) the second-highest of the new titles (*asomi*). Other clans that had backed Temmu got no more than *sukune.* And clans that had not supported Temmu received no new title, being permitted merely to retain their old titles. By placing emperor-connected and emperor-supporting clans at the pinnacle of a clearly defined hierarchical order, Temmu had thus created what has been called "the new nobility."[8]

Spiritual authority of the emperor

Modern historians tend to see major currents of political and social change, even those in ancient times, as arising mainly from shifts in

8 Ibid., p. 141.

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military power and economic wealth (physical sources of power and authority), but the aristocratic leaders of ancient Japan apparently felt that major currents of change had arisen, and would continue to arise, principally from shifts in the power and will of supernatural forces and divine beings (spiritual sources of power and authority). Under the influence of ritually unified Silla, Temmu was clearly attempting to bolster his imperial position by means of the priestly authority traditionally enjoyed by clan chieftains. It is thus not surprising to find that the official chronicle of that day (the *Nihon shoki*) includes numerous references to what Temmu and his successors did to sanctify their positions by means of their association with, and patronage of, important religious practices and institutions.

Relatively calm relations with the outside world during the last two decades of the seventh century caused Japanese leaders to be less preoccupied with the possibility of military invasion from the continent and more interested in any and all nonmilitary ways of unifying and strengthening the imperial state. No Japanese mission was sent to the T'ang court in the last years of the seventh century, although one was dispatched not long after the promulgation of the Taihō code in 701 and six others went before the Nara period came to a close in 784. To be sure, diplomatic missions were periodically exchanged with the Korean state of Silla, where Chinese influence was strong, and with Parhae (P'o-hai), whose territory extended from the Liaotung peninsula into northeast Korea. But Japan had stopped sending military expeditions against Korean states. Moreover, Japanese envoys were then less interested in territorial and military matters than in such cultural activity as acquiring Buddhist and Confucian texts, gathering information on Chinese science and art, and becoming familiar with T'ang methods of political and social control. They seem to have been especially fascinated with Chinese techniques and ideas that would reinforce the foundations of a Nara state headed by an emperor whose authority was both secular and religious.

Although most modern scholars have concentrated on the introduction of Chinese bureaucratic forms and procedures during the Nara period, several recent studies are leading us to appreciate what Temmu and his court were doing to build an imperial order held together ritually, not just militarily and administratively. Particularly significant were the steps taken to place the emperor at the top of what might be described as a four-layered system of kami worship. At its apex was a hierarchy of kami in which the ancestral kami of the imperial clan (the Sun Goddess) stood above the ancestral kami of all other clans. At

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the second layer was a hierarchy of priestly rulers in which the emperor outranked other clan chieftains. At the third was a ritual system in which the most important rites, and the most generous offerings, were by and for the emperor. Finally, there was a shrine system in which the Ise Grand Shrine for the worship of the imperial clan's ancestral kami was placed above all other shrines for the worship of ancestral kami.

Temmu also took special steps to sanctify his own imperial position by demonstrating, and nurturing belief in, his divinity as a direct descendant of the greatest kami of all: the Sun Goddess. He is thought to have initiated the practice of issuing imperial edicts that began with these words: "Hear ye the edict of an emperor of Japan who is a manifest kami (*akitsukami*)," a practice followed by imperial successors throughout the Nara period.[9] And soon after winning the civil war of 672, Temmu reinstated the practice of having an imperial princess take up residence at the Ise Grand Shrine to worship the Sun Goddess on his behalf.[10] By taking such action, he and his successors not only affirmed their divinity but also placed the Sun Goddess above all other kami of the land, a position that she still holds.

Temmu also had offerings and prayers made at other key shrines, and he used the Council of Kami Affairs (the Jingikan, which had no Chinese parallel) for making himself the chief priest of kami worship at shrines all over the country.[11] Finally, he issued an order, recorded in the preface to the *Kojiki* (see Chapter 10) that an imperial chronicle be compiled explaining that the ties between the kami line and the imperial line are the "warp and woof of the Japanese state and the foundations of imperial rule" and should therefore be clearly defined and recorded. Because the *Kojiki* focused on the direct descent of emperors from the Sun Goddess, we can assume that Temmu's purpose in having it compiled was to sanctify his authority in one more respected way.

Although Temmu and his immediate successors were intent on laying the ritual and institutional foundations for Japanese rulers as high priests of kami worship, they seem to have given as much or more attention to a second source of sacral authority: the worship of Buddha. Immediately after the Great Reforms of 645, the government moved to reinforce imperial authority with Buddhist rites, causing the leading

9 *Nihon shoki*, Temmu 12 (683) 1/18, NKBT 68.456–7.
10 *Nihon shoki*, Temmu 2 (673) 4/14, NKBT 68.412–13.
11 *Nihon shoki* Temmu 5 (676) 9/21, NKBT 68.425–7.

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temples to lose their clan character and to become imperial institutions. After Temmu's military victories in 672, activity of this sort was accelerated and broadened. In 673, the year of Temmu's enthronement, the great Takechi no Ōdera temple was erected by imperial command, and in 680 the construction of the famous Yakushi-ji was begun. Before Temmu's reign came to a close in 686, the imperial court began to give financial support to important temples founded in earlier years (such as the Kawara-dera and the Asuka-dera) and to place Buddhist priests in the offices of high priest (*sōjō*) and vicar general (*sōzu*), who were ordered to offer up prayers for the prosperity of the state. Thenceforth, sutras expounding the doctrine that Buddhist worship could benefit the state were recited, upon orders handed down by the reigning emperor or empress, at temples within the capital and in the outlying provinces. But the full thrust of imperial patronage came in the second phase of the Nara period.

Building capitals to support imperial authority

The spiritual authority of the Japanese ruler was strengthened not only by kami worship at the most important shrines and by Buddha worship at the leading temples but also by the construction of Chinese-style capitals. Whereas shrines and temples reinforced the position of a sovereign as a divine mediatory with unseen powers, impressive foreign-style capital cities symbolized his position at the "sacred center" of Japan's this-worldly order. (See Map 4.1.)

Recent archaeological studies show that the imperial palace built at Naniwa sometime after 645 had a Chinese-style audience hall (*daigoku-den*), and that certain buildings erected at Ōtsu (Tenji's capital) and Asuka no Kiyomihara (Temmu's capital) were also Chinese in appearance.[12] But a full-scale Chinese-style capital was apparently not built until the reign of Empress Jitō (686 to 697). The chronicles state that the empress selected a site for the new capital at Fujiwara, which was located on a plain north of the previous capital at Asuka no Kiyomihara. Fujiwara was to face south, with mountains on its three other sides (Kagu to the east, Miminashi to the north, and Unebi to the west). Construction was started in 694. Investigations of Fujiwara – begun in 1934, discontinued in 1945, resumed in 1966 – have revealed

12 Temmu had constructed a capital around his Asuka no Kiyomihara palace, but the exact location is unknown. Probably he had planned a Chinese-style capital but died before it was completed.

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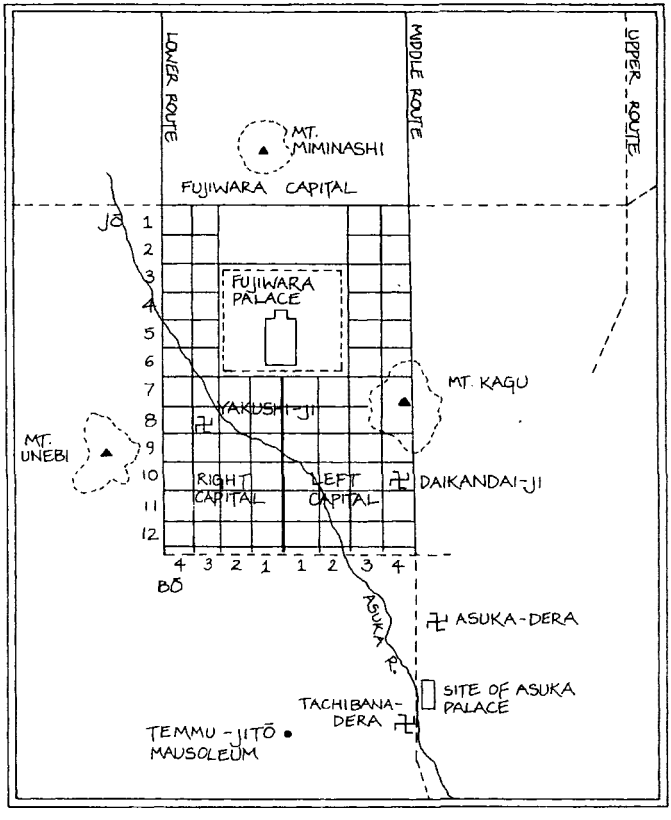

Map 4.1 Fujiwara capital.

the location and size of the capital's buildings and streets. Fujiwara was probably modeled after Lo-yang, the capital of the Chinese kingdom of Northern Wei. The pillars of its principal buildings were placed on stone foundations in the Chinese manner; their roofs were covered with Chinese tiles; and the palace zone (including the imperial palace and governmental office buildings) was a square located on the north side of the capital, as in China. The palace zone (a square) occupied an area of 1.05 square kilometers within a capital that was 3.2 kilometers long, from north to south, and 2.1 kilometers wide. As the center of imperial rule during the reigns of Jitō and Mommu (686 to 707), it must have convinced everyone, even envoys arriving from Silla, that the Japanese emperor was indeed divine and mighty. But as we shall note, Fujiwara was much smaller and not nearly so splendid as the capital that was built later at Heijō, now Nara.

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Legal supports for imperial authority

Japanese students who had spent several years in China before the beginning of the Great Reforms in 645 understood that law, and especially administrative law (*ryō*), was a powerful support for China's empire, a support that could be used to strengthen the state of Japan. They must have known, too, that Chinese administrative law, in addition to delineating the forms and functions of offices for accumulating revenue and services, had instituted arrangements for reinforcing an emperor's spiritual authority. The reforms adopted in Japan during and after 645 were therefore linked with the promulgation of laws that defined and justified both the secular and sacerdotal authority of an emperor.

Emperor Tenji, who reigned from 661 to 671, is said to have ordered the compilation of an administrative code in twenty-two volumes, but no copy of this Ōmi code has been preserved. Then in 681 Temmu reportedly instructed his ministers to "reform the law," suggesting that there really was an Ōmi code and that Temmu's order led to the compilation of what is known as the Asuka no Kiyomihara administrative code. The latter, also in twenty-two volumes, is thought to have been modeled on the Chinese Yung-hui code of 651 and to have been promulgated in 689, the third year of Jitō's reign.[13] It, too, no longer exists.

Then came the Taihō penal and administrative code of 701. Because only fragments of it have been preserved, we have no detailed knowledge of its contents. But references made in contemporary accounts – together with what is written in later commentaries on administrative law (the *Ryō no gige* compiled in 833 and the *Ryō no shuge*, a few decades later) and the assumption that the Taihō code was similar to the later Yōrō penal and administrative code of 718 – lead us to reason that the following administrative arrangements were written into law between the beginning of Temmu's reign in 673 and the promulgation of the Taihō code in 702:

1. *Household registration.* A system for keeping track of households was instituted in 670 with the appearance of household registers (*koseki*). In 689 Empress Jitō ordered that registers be kept in accordance with articles of the Asuka no Kiyomihara code, an order said to

13 A few years ago it was commonly held that a penal code was compiled at this time, but now the opposite view prevails. See Ishio Yoshihisa, *Nihon kodaihō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōritsu bunkasha, 1959); and Aoki Kazuo, "Ritsuryō ron," in Nihon rekishi gakkai, comp., *Nihon shi no mondaiten* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1968).

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have been implemented the following year. Because these registrations were used for assessing taxes from the land and services from the people, they were important and frequently revised.

2. *Tribute collection.* Before 680, tribute (taxes) took the form of rice collected from a household according to the area of land that it cultivated. But after 680, tribute was collected from individuals rather than households.

3. *Administration of local areas.* Before the beginning of Temmu's reign in 673, most local affairs were administered by clan chieftains. But after the Asuka no Kiyōmihara and Taihō codes had been promulgated, nearly all local units – sixty provinces (*kuni*) divided into districts (*kōri*) containing villages (*sato*) of fifty households each – came under the jurisdiction of the imperial court.

4. *Administration of central affairs.* As early as Temmu's reign, a central administrative organ called the Office of Senior Controller (Daibenkan) existed, but it did not include a chancellor (*daijō daijin*), a minister of the left, or a minister of the right. The provisions of the Asuka no Kiyomihara code of 689 changed the name of this supervisory body to Council of State (Daijōkan) and added these three ministers, placing them over three high offices already in existence: those of the senior, middle, and junior counselors. Sometime after the Asuka no Kiyomihara code had made these alterations, two new offices were created: Central Affairs (Naka no Tsukasa) and Inner Court Affairs (Miya no Uchi no Tsukasa).[14] These were in accord with earlier Chinese models, making us wonder why the Japanese were so late in adopting them. Both dealt with court affairs and therefore reflected the current urge to strengthen the sacral as well as the secular authority of the emperor.

5. *Administration of military affairs.* The Asuka no Kiyomihara code provided for provincial military units made up of one young male conscript from each household.[15] More details of the arrangement were supplied in the Taihō code.

The government was run by a system of offices ranging from those closest to the emperor to others at more distant places and at lower levels. These offices had histories of their own, coming into existence at different times with different names and functions. Here we shall

14 Satō Sōjun, "Ritsuryō daijōkansei no tennō," in *Kodai*, vol. 1 of Hara Hidesaburō et al., eds., *Taikei Nihon kokkashi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppansha, 1975), pp. 184–5. Denis Twitchett pointed out that these offices were not parts of a Chinese "outer court" but agencies for managing the imperial household and inner palace.

15 See Naoki Kōjirō, *Asuka Nara jidai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1975), pp. 262–6.

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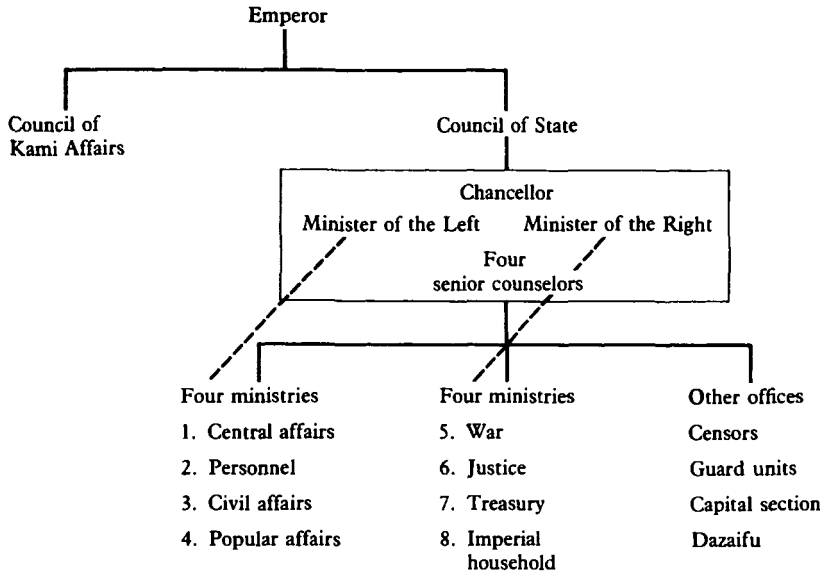

Figure 4.2. Nara bureaucratic order. (Based on information from Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, p. 36.)

survey merely the ones that were probably named and defined in the Taihō administrative code of 701 and the Yōrō code of 718.

At the apex of the structure was the emperor, whose will was expressed in decrees (*mikotonori*) and edicts (*semmyō*). Important decisions, such as those pertaining to appointments and promotions of high-ranking officials, were recommended at meetings of the Council of State but were carried out only with imperial approval. The two codes placed no limitations on imperial authority, thus giving the emperor, legally at least, despotic control.

Under the emperor were two councils that had equal standing: the Council of State, generally overseeing secular affairs, and the Council of Kami Affairs, running affairs in the area of kami worship (see Figure 4.2). Although the two councils were organizationally at the same level, the Council of State's highest minister (the chancellor) held a higher rank than did the highest official of the Council of Kami Affairs. But the chancellor also had some responsibilities that lay outside the bounds of secular administration: He served as the emperor's guide and teacher and was given the task of harmonizing movements of the world with Chinese principles of yin and yang.

Below the chancellor, the minister of the left, and the minister of

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the right were four senior counselors. In consultation with one another, counselors and ministers made important policy decisions and recommended appointments and promotions for high-ranking officials. Under these six men were the heads of three administrative offices, referred to as the Council of State's three departments: the Department of Junior Counselors (Shōnagonkan), the Department of the Controller of the Left (Sabenkan), and the Department of the Controller of the Right (Ubenkan). The first included three junior counselors authorized to serve as custodians of the imperial and Council of State seals, and the last two were responsible for transmitting imperial orders (*senji*), distributing orders issued by the Council of State (*kampu*), and handling communications between the council and its eight ministries.

The first four ministries were under the minister of the left, and the next four were under the minister of the right, as follows: (1) The Ministry of Central Affairs (the Nakatsukasa-shō) ranked above all other ministries and was the main link between the emperor and the Council of State. Its minister gave advice on numerous court matters, supervised the court chamberlains, and drafted imperial edicts. Under him were ten secretariats, including the Secretariat for the Empress's Household (Chūgūshiki). (2) The Ministry of Personnel (Shikibu-shō) supervised personnel affairs. Within it were two important bureaus: one for higher learning (Daigaku-ryō) and another for nobles who held a court rank but occupied no office (Sammi-ryō). (3) The Ministry of Civil Affairs (Jibu-shō) had two important bureaus: one for Buddhist priests and nuns and aliens (Gemba-ryō) and another for court music (Gagaku-ryō). (4) The Ministry of Popular Affairs (Mimbu-shō) was responsible for administering household registers, taxes, irrigation, paddy fields, and the budget. (5) The Ministry of War (Hyōbu-shō) took care of personnel matters pertaining to soldiers and other military affairs. (6) The Ministry of Justice (Gyōbu-shō) handled legal affairs. (7) The Ministry of the Treasury (Ōkura-shō) dealt with state property, weights and measures, prices, and related matters. (8) The Ministry of the Imperial Household (Kunai-shō) managed food, clothing, and personnel problems of the imperial household. Inside each ministry were several, often several tens of, administrative organs of three types: secretariats (*shiki*), bureaus (*ryō*), and offices (*tsukasa*).

Outside the ministerial structure were a number of important boards and administrative units, including, first, the Board of Censors (Danjōdai) that was engaged in exposing the illegal activities of officials and upholding standards of correct bureaucratic behavior. Also

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there were the headquarters of the various guard units, beginning with the five that guarded the imperial palace: the gate guards (*emon-fu*), the left guards (*saeji-fu*), the right guards (*ueji-fu*), the left military guards (*sahyōe-fu*), and the right military guards (*uhyōe-fu*). The central government had, in addition, a right and left bureau of cavalry and a right and left bureau of armories. Other offices outside the eight ministries included two that were responsible for the left and right sectors of the capital.

Organs of government outside the capital included, first of all, the Dazai headquarters (Dazai-fu) located near the harbor of Na in Kyushu from which the nine provinces of Kyushu, as well as the islands of Iki and Tsushima, were administered. Each of the country's sixty or more provinces[16] was headed by a governor who usually had under him ten or more districts headed by district supervisors. Each district contained between two and twenty villages (*sato*) made up of fifty households each. A governor was appointed for a six-year term, but the district supervisors, usually selected from the local gentry, had no fixed term of office. The Taihō administrative code contained no articles dealing with village heads, but it is assumed that they were influential farmers.[17]

The country was divided into the Kinai (made up of five provinces around the capital[18]) and seven regions: the Tōkai (provinces on the eastern seacoast), the Tōsan (eastern mountain provinces), the Hokuriku (northwestern provinces), the Sanyō (Inland Sea provinces), the San'in (mountain provinces behind the San'yō), the Nankai (southern provinces), and the Saikai (provinces on the western seacoast). In principle, every province had one or more military corps of one thousand soldiers. The number of corps for a province was not specified in the Taihō code, but it is estimated that every three districts had at least one. Kyushu, facing the continent, had a special military organization

16 The *Nihon shoki* carries items indicating that provinces existed before the codes were compiled in the closing years of the seventh century. See Naoki Kōjirō, "Taihōryō-zen kansei ni tsuite no ni san no kōsatsu," in Inoue Mitsusada hakushi kanreki kinenkai, ed., *Kodaishi ronsō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 17–20.

17 An excellent study of the Nara period administrative structure is Richard J. Miller's *Japan's First Bureaucracy: A Study of Eighth Century Government* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University East Asia Papers no. 19, 1978). Valuable information about the Council of Kami Affairs (Jingikan) was supplied by Felicia G. Bock in chap. 2 of *Engi-Shiki Procedures of the Engi Era [Books 1–5]* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 17–24. An important earlier study was made by George B. Sansom in "Early Japanese Law and Administration," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (hereafter cited as TASJ) 9 (1932): 67–109 and 11 (1934): 117–49.

18 Izumi was split off from Kawachi to make five provinces instead of the original four: Yamashiro, Yamato, Settsu, and Kawachi.

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under its Dazai headquarters that was made up of conscripted troops (*tsuwamono*) and guards (*sakimori*).

Down through the administrative structure – from the heads of offices around the emperor to those in charge of local offices in distant regions – ran a hierarchy of office titles and ranks. Heads of the highest offices held the title of director (*kami*) who had assistants (*suke*), secretaries (*jō*), and clerks (*sakan*). (These four office titles were written with different characters but pronounced in the same way when held by officials serving in different ministries and agencies.) According to the Yōrō adminstrative code of 718, the number of officials in the two councils and eight ministries totaled 331. If lower-ranking officials are added, the total was 6,487.

Ranks provided a more precise indication of status than titles did, for officeholders with the same title had different ranks yielding different stipends and perquisites. The Taihō code set aside four imperial ranks (*hon*) for princes and near relatives of the emperor and thirty court ranks (*kurai*) for persons lower in the aristocratic order. The son or grandson of a nobleman holding the highest imperial rank was automatically awarded a junior fifth rank lower grade court rank when he reached the age of twenty-one. Special treatment for anyone with a fifth rank or above – apart from the rights that their sons had to a high rank when they turned twenty-one, irrespective of ability – is revealed by the generous stipends and retainers they received (see Table 4.1).

University students – almost exclusively young men of aristocratic birth – who passed the civil service examinations were usually appointed to positions with such titles as "lower-class officials" (*toneri*) or attendants to imperial princes (*chōnai*). But for years they often held no court rank at all. Even after thirty or more years of excellent service, they commonly rose no higher than junior sixth rank upper grade. And even a young man who passed the examinations with distinction seldom reached eighth rank upper grade.

Governmental positions were customarily filled by persons holding appropriately high ranks. In some cases a high-ranked aristocrat would discover that no position appropriate to his rank was available, causing him to be referred to as a person having rank but no office (*sammi*). But usually the eldest son or grandson of a high-level aristocrat did receive an appropriate office with stipends and retainers, as shown in Table 4.1, even if he did no work. Thus members of the same clans tended to dominate all the offices of Japan's emerging administrative order, generation after generation. Probably that was precisely what the architects of the system had intended.

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An aristocratic officeholder, whether stationed at court or in a distant province, received his stipends twice a year: once in spring and again in autumn. In addition to lands and households for his rank (*iden* and *ifu*), he was granted lands and households for his office (*shikiden* and *shikifu*). The households were the major source of his income. From each, whether for rank or for office, he received craft and labor levies (*chō* and *yō*) and half of the rice tribute (*so*). A minister of the left or minister of the right was entitled to two thousand households of about forty villages, approximately the number of households in a province the size of Suō or Nagato, and such income was tax exempt.

But an official at or below senior sixth rank upper grade did not fare so well. If he got no more than the official stipend listed for his rank, he probably did not have enough to support his family. Therefore an official at or below the level of provincial governor was forced to make ends meet by finding ways to supplement his income.

An aristocratic official also received preferential treatment when violating the law, for punishments varied with the criminal's status. Such favoritism was particularly clear when an official of high rank committed one of the eight serious crimes (*hachigyaku*) against society and the state, such as conspiracy or disloyal behavior. Five types of punishment with increasing degrees of severity were prescribed: whipping, beating, penal servitude, exile, and execution. But if an official held the third rank or above, he would not be punished, even if he had committed one of these serious crimes. If he were both the chief administrator and the chief judge, he was in a position to judge whether he himself had committed a crime and, if so, what his punishment would be. In any case, only the Council of State could inflict the death penalty. A provincial governor, the heads of the left and right administrative offices at the capital, and the minister of justice could do no more than exile an offender, and district supervisors and low-ranking officials at the capital could inflict punishments no more severe than whipping or beating.

The highest officials of the state made up a select group from Yamato and Kawachi that included the emperor, members of his household, and leaders of such old and powerful clans as the Fujiwara, Ōtomo, Isonokami (formerly Mononobe), and Abe (a Fuse branch). The total number of individuals in this elite group (fifth rank or higher) probably came to no more than 125. Provisions of the Taihō code, as noted, protected the exclusiveness of this group by allowing their high ranks and offices to be passed on to their sons and grandsons.

The authority of the emperor at the top of this select group was

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TABLE 4.1

Allowances according to the Taihō code (I)

Court rank	Paddy fields (*chō*)	Sust. Hsehlds. (*kō*)	Stipends: Pongee (*hiki*)	Silk (*ton*)	Hemp (*tan*)	excise Cloth (*jō*)	Seasonal stipend: Pongee (*hiki*)	Silk (*ton*)	Hemp Cloth (*tan*)	Hoes (*kō*)	Personal retainers accorded (number)
1st *hon*	80	800					30	30	100	140	100
2nd *hon*	60	600					20	20	60	100	80
3rd *hon*	50	400					14	14	42	80	60
4th *hon*	40	300					8	8	22	30	40
Sr. 1st	80	300					30	30	100	140	00
Jr. 1st	74	260					30	30	100	140	100
Sr. 2nd	60	200					20	20	60	100	80
Jr. 2nd	54	170					20	20	60	100	80
Sr. 3rd	40	130					14	14	42	80	60
Jr. 3rd	34	100					12	12	36	60	60
Sr. 4th	24		10	10	10	360	8	8	22	30	40
Jr. 4th	20		8	8	43	300	7	7	18	30	35
Sr. 5th	12		6	6	36	240	5	5	12	20	25
Jr. 5th	8		4	4	29	180	4	4	12	20	20
Sr. 6th							3	3	5	15	
Jr. 6th							3	3	4	15	
Sr. 7th							2	2	4	15	
Jr. 7th							2	2	4	15	
Sr. 8th							1	1	3	15	
Jr. 8th							1	1	3	10	
Daisho							1	1	3	10	
Shōsho							1	1	3	5	

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Allowances according to the Taihō code (II)

Government post	Paddy fields (*chō*)	Sustenance households (*kō*)	Personal retainers (number)
Minister of state	40	3,000	300
Ministers of left and right	30	2,000	200
Counselors (*dainagon*)	20	800	100
Middle counselors (*chūnagon*)		200	30
Advisers (*sangi*)		80	

Note: Chūnagon by the regulation of 705; *sangi* by that of 730.

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great but not unlimited. He could issue an edict ordering the appointment of a crown prince or minister, but his edict had to be countersigned by the chancellor, minister of the left, or minister of the right. On the other hand, the following matters could not be acted on by the Council of State until its recommendations had been reported to the emperor and approved by him: (1) scheduling important state ceremonies like the Great Feast of the Enthronement (Daijōsai), (2) increasing or decreasing the government's operating costs, (3) altering the number of officials, (4) inflicting punishments by death or exile, and (5) forming or abolishing districts. The emperor could approve or disapprove a recommendation but could not make amendments. Usually he approved. In principle, then, the emperor had dictatorial power, but in practice, his power was limited by the consultative authority of the Council of State.[19]

How did relationships between the emperor and the Council of State differ from those of a T'ang emperor served by three state organs: the Secretariat (Chung-shu sheng), the Chancellery (Men-hsia sheng), and the Department of State Affairs (Shang-shu sheng)? The heads of these Chinese bodies were the state's highest administrators, but they were no more than instruments of inquiry and did not have complete authority over their own departments. The Secretariat's highest officer would draft imperial edicts after receiving instructions from the emperor, and officials of the Chancellery would examine the draft and make revisions. Other departmental heads could see memorials and report their views to the throne. The Secretariat, which administered the six boards, would see that an edict was implemented after it had been examined and revised by the Chancellery. But the Chancellery did little more than look for textual deficiencies and usually did not consider the edict's contents. China's highest state officials, therefore, did not have nearly as much authority as did their counterparts in Japan.

Heads of Chinese aristocratic clans were also relatively weak, as we can see when comparing the ranks given to the sons and grandsons of high-ranking officeholders with those received by their Japanese counterparts. Chinese law stated that the heirs of first-rank officers were entitled to senior seventh rank lower grade, whereas in Japan they would receive fifth rank lower grade. A study of the ranks bestowed on the sons of officials at lower levels of the aristocracy also shows that the Japanese were treated better.

19 Seki Akira, "Ritsuryō kizoku ron," *Kodai*, vol. 3 of Asao Naohiro, Ishii Susumu, Inoue Mitsusada, Ōishi Kaichirō et al., eds., *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976), pp. 38–63.

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But what made the Japanese bureaucratic structure quite different from that of China was the Council of Kami Affairs, which was placed under the emperor at a position equal to that of the Council of State. The compilers of the Taihō code, though giving close attention to Chinese law, were obviously intent on preserving and using traditional sources of sacral authority. Because the Japanese law provided crucial support for the emperor's spiritual and secular authority, historians commonly think of these years as the high point of the "administrative and penal law (*ritsuryō*)" order.

NARA AND TŌDAI-JI

The death of Emperor Mommu (Temmu's grandson) in 707 at the age of twenty-five came at the beginning of the Nara period's second phase, when a grand Chinese-style capital and a statewide system of Buddhist temples (centered at the Tōdai-ji) were built. Mommu's death was followed by an upheaval at court from which emerged two powerful and influential leaders: Fujiwara no Fuhito (659–720) and Emperor Shōmu (701–56). Both became deeply involved in activities that helped to make this a time of remarkable cultural achievement.

The upheaval of the court

Whenever an emperor or empress became ill, it was customary for prominent shrines and temples to offer up prayers for a speedy recovery. The *Shoku Nihongi*'s lack of such references during the five months that preceded Mommu's death thus suggests that he may have been murdered. The chronicle supplies considerable information about a succession issue that divided the court and that probably was linked with Mommu's untimely death. The major question was whether the next emperor should be Prince Obito (the future Emperor Shōmu, whose mother was Fuhito's daughter) or a Mommu son with a non-Fujiwara mother (see Figure 4.3). Because Mommu had no brothers, three living sons of Temmu were also eligible candidates for enthronement. But none of these princes was selected. Instead, Mommu's mother ascended the throne as Empress Gemmei. This was considered to be a partial victory for those who favored Obito's candidacy, as Gemmei stated that she wanted Obito to succeed her. The enthronement of Gemmei therefore led Fujiwara no Fuhito to feel that he would soon have the power and prestige customarily held by a maternal grand-

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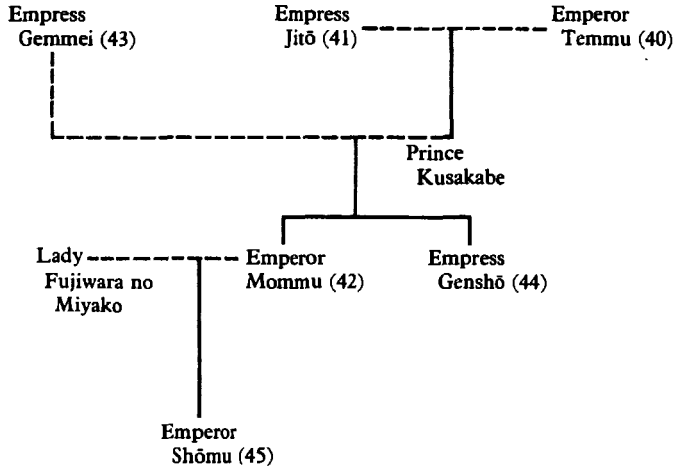

Figure 4.3. Mommu's successors. Dashed line indicates spousal relationship; solid line, offspring. (Reign numbers are in parentheses, as recorded in the *Gunkashō* chronology; see Brown and Ishida, trans., *The Future and the Past*, pp. 264–78.)

father of a reigning emperor, and he moved closer to that coveted goal in 714 when Prince Obito was appointed crown prince. But Fuhito died four years before the prince was enthroned as Emperor Shōmu in 724.

The details of Fuhito's rise to power are not known, but as the son of Fujiwara no Kamatari (614–669), one of the three principal architects of the 645 rebellion and the subsequent Great Reforms (see Chapter 3), he was obviously born on a very high rung of the aristocratic ladder. Although not yet forty at the time of Mommu's death in 707 and only at junior second rank, Fuhito is thought to have been the most influential man at court, strong enough to affect the course of events leading to the enthronement of a woman who wished to be succeeded by his grandson.

Two events of historical importance occurred in the year after Mommu's death: the discovery of copper in the province of Musashi and an edict by Empress Gemmei announcing that the capital was being moved to Heijō (hereafter referred to as Nara), which was north of Fujiwara on the northern rim of the Nara plain. The first event was considered sufficiently important for the court to decide that 708 was to be the first year of the Wadō (Japan copper) era and for historians to link the discovery of copper with the rise of a more highly developed exchange economy and a sudden increase in the number of bronze statues.

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The Nara capital

When Empress Gemmei issued her edict of 708 stating that the capital was to be moved to a new site, she said that sacred signs indicated that Heijō (Nara) – surrrounded by three mountains to the east, north, and west – was a propitious location[20] (see Map 4.2). She undoubtedly was influenced by other considerations, such as the ancient custom of moving the capital at the beginning of a new regime and the desire to have a successor rule from a new and more impressive palace. But the increasingly influential Fujiwara no Fuhito probably had his own reasons for favoring the move. More concerned with strategic and economic questions than with geomancy and divination, he probably understood quite well that although Fujiwara had had ready access, by overland roads, to the Inland Sea harbor of Naniwa, Nara was close to rivers by which goods could be transported to and from Naniwa by boat. He and his colleagues at court must have appreciated that Nara was no more than six kilometers south of the Kizu River (navigable all the way to Naniwa) and that Nara was closer than Fujiwara was to the Saho River (flowing into the Yamato River that emptied into the Inland Sea at Naniwa). Thus Nara probably had, in addition to the propitiousness of mountains on three sides, economic and strategic advantages superior to those of any other place in the entire Yamato Province.

Recent archaeological investigations have disclosed special geographical ties between Nara and Fujiwara. Moving north from the avenue that ran along the western side of the old capital, one entered the Great Suzaku Avenue that passed through the middle of the new capital. And proceeding north from the street that ran along the eastern side of Fujiwara, one entered Nara's East Capital Avenue. (Only the latter's West Capital Avenue was not a straight-line extension of a Fujiwara avenue.) Nara was therefore not only laid out in the square fashion of a Chinese capital but also had avenues that ran in precisely the same direction as – or were exactly parallel to – those of Fujiwara to the south. Why were the builders so careful to establish such a precise geographical relationship between the two capitals? As far as we know, the question was neither raised nor alluded to in contemporary sources, but we seem to see here a concrete expression of the belief that a sovereign reigning at Nara was to be honored as a direct lineal descendant of predecessors who had reigned at Fujiwara.

20 *Shoku Nihongi*, Wadō 1 (708) 2/15, in Kuroita Katsumi and Kokushi Taikei henshūkai, eds., *Shintei zōho: Kokushi taikei* (hereafter cited as KT) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1982), vol. 1, p. 34.

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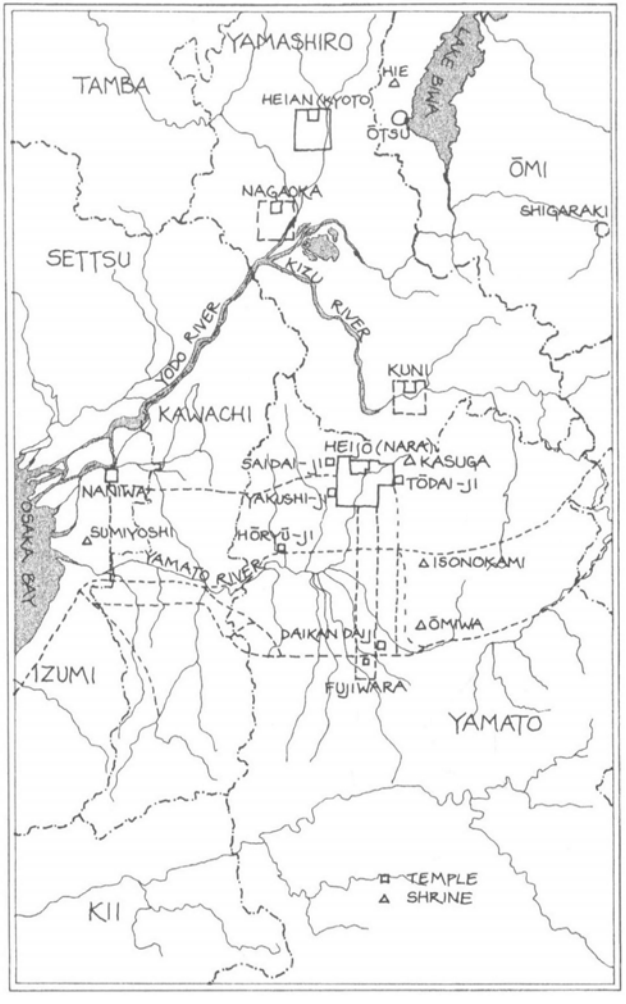

Map 4.2 Ancient capitals, shrines, and temples. (Based on Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, 1974, inside backcover.)

As grand as Nara was, it covered no more than one-fourth of the area of China's capital at Ch'ang-an (which had an estimated population of 1.2 million) and it was not surrounded by high walls as in China. Still, Nara with a population of around 200,000 was about three times as large as Fujiwara, indicating that it had become a political, economic, and religious center of a powerful imperium.

But the spiritual authority of the emperor was enhanced not only by the building of an impressive Chinese-style capital but also by the

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erection of beautiful, massive Buddhist temples. Soon after Empress Gemmei moved her palace to Nara, temples originally built in Fujiwara or elsewhere in the Asuka area (especially the Asuka-dera, Yakushi-ji, Daian-ji, and Kōfuku-ji) were rebuilt at the new capital. Moreover, additional temples were constructed in provinces all over the country for an emerging Buddhist system.

The Fuhito regime (708 to 720)

Even though Fuhito was the most powerful official at the time of Emperor Mommu's unexplained death in 707, seven years passed before his grandson Obito was named crown prince, and ten more years before Obito was enthroned as Emperor Shōmu. Fuhito was unable to realize his ambitions for Obito sooner because influential aristocrats favored the enthronement of an imperial son with an imperial mother: either Prince Hironari or Prince Hiroyo, who were sons of Ishikawa no Toji. Only when Fuhito and his supporters succeeded in having Ishikawa no Toji expelled from the court in 713 were they able to arrange the appointment of Obito as crown prince. But even that did not end the struggle, for Obito was not enthroned after Empress Gemmei decided to abdicate in 715. The empress elected (or was forced) to pass the throne to her own daughter, who reigned as Empress Genshō (680–748).

Why did Obito – the future Emperor Shōmu – fail to reach the throne in 715? One view is that he was then too young (only fifteen) to assume the responsibilities of an emperor. But Obito's father Mommu was placed on the throne at about that same age. A more convincing theory is that Obito's candidacy met with disfavor because his mother was a Fujiwara and thus not a member of the imperial clan. For nearly a century the fathers and mothers of all occupants of the throne had been members of the imperial clan, and this old tradition could not be easily broken, even by Fuhito[21] (see Figure 4.3).

Although Fuhito did not live to see his grandson's enthronement, his influence at court was nonetheless considerable. He was appointed minister of the right in 715 at the beginning of Genshō's reign and continued to hold that high office until his death in 720. Only two other officials outranked him: the chancellor and the minister of the

21 The mother of Prince Ōtomo was not a member of the imperial clan, which may be why the *Nihon shoki* does not admit that Ōtomo ever occupied the throne. If he did become emperor, an exception was made to the long tradition that both the mother and father of an emperor should be members of the imperial clan.

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left. Prince Hozumi had been named chancellor in 705 but died before the beginning of Genshō's reign in 715, and no new chancellor was appointed while Fuhito was alive. Isonokami no Maro was minister of the left but died in 717. His post, too, was left vacant. In this way the dominance of court affairs by an emperor's relatives – a practice established in the previous century – was abolished by Fuhito and his Fujiwara relatives.

After the discovery of copper in 708, the Fuhito regime moved to stimulate trade by minting coins (see Chapter 8) and three years later, to facilitate the transport of goods by setting up post stations (*eki*) around the capital, to lighten the indebtedness of commoners by reducing interest charges on private rice loans (*shi-suiko*) to 50 percent, and to help farmers by preventing nobles and local aristocrats from occupying public lands.[22] Even though the economy of Nara and its environs was stimulated by such measures during the twelve years of the Fuhito regime, numerous construction projects became a heavy drain on the state's resources. As early as 711, the empress issued an edict in which she stated: "We hear that of late many laborers brought to the capital from the various provinces for construction work have been deserting. Although desertion has been prohibited, it continues."[23] And another edict handed down five years later noted the misery and discontent among people engaged in supplying and transporting goods.[24]

Attempts were made to improve the administration of local affairs, thereby increasing the government's control over natural and human resources. For example, in 712, after the Ezo people of northern Japan had been subjugated, the northern province of Dewa was created. The provincial governors were also ordered to attend more carefully to the collection of revenues and the prevention of tax evasion. Household registers were revised, and eleven governors were assigned a new supervisory role. But the most famous administrative measure of the Fuhito years was the compilation of the Yōrō administrative code, probably started in 717. Although a draft of the revision was not completed until after Fuhito's death and was not promulgated until 757, legal work of this type is thought to have strengthened a bureaucracy that was endeavoring to increase state income and state control.

22 State loans (*kō-suiko*) were a Nara period form of taxation, a source of income yielding as much as 100% interest per annum. See Chapter 8 of this volume.

23 *Shoku Nihongi*, Wadō 4 (711), 7, KT 1.45.

24 *Shoku Nihongi*, Reiki 2 (716) 4/20, KT 1.64–65.

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Prince Nagaya's regime (721 to 729)

After Fuhito's death in 720, the highest position in the Council of State was occupied by Prince Nagaya (684–729), a senior counselor of senior third rank. One day after Fuhito's death, Prince Toneri was appointed acting chancellor, a post that had been left vacant for five years. At the same time, Prince Niitabe was placed in charge of the five imperial guards and of the crown prince's guards. And in the first month of 721 Prince Nagaya was promoted to minister of the right (Fuhito's old position) and advanced to junior second rank. This meant that key positions were now held by imperial princes: Toneri and Niitabe were sons of Temmu, and Nagaya was his grandson. Thus the Fujiwara men who had been at the center of the political stage while Fuhito was alive became outsiders who held only minor posts.

But the Fujiwara influence was not insignificant. Fuhito's widow Agata Inukai no Michiyo could still alter the course of events at court. She had served near, and had been trusted by, both Empress Gemmei and Empress Genshō, and it was probably because of her influence that Fusasaki was appointed to the newly created post of minister of the center (*naishin*) in the tenth month of 721. Although this new position did not permit Fusasaki to participate in council deliberations, it did give him the responsibility of consulting with the empress and assisting her in the expression of imperial will. Michiyo's influence may have been due in part, however, to her marriage connections with the imperial clan, as she had been the wife of an imperial prince before marrying Fuhito.

An even clearer sign that the Fujiwara still had considerable influence on court affairs emerges from events after the abdication of Empress Genshō in 724, when Fuhito's grandson was finally enthroned as Emperor Shōmu. We do not have enough reliable evidence to know precisely why Shōmu was selected. Possibly it was because Prince Nagaya had decided that the turbulent political situation could be stabilized only by recognizing the legitimacy of Obito's position as crown prince. But it seems that Shōmu's enthronement came at the beginning of a resurgence of Fujiwara control.

Economic difficulties may have been another factor. In 722, not long after the rise of Prince Nagaya's regime, the government announced an ambitious plan to place 1 million more *chō* of land (over 2.5 million acres) under cultivation. Then in the following year a law was issued allowing a farmer to leave newly cultivated land to his

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heirs, but if the new rice land were supplied with water from ponds and ditches already in existence, the developer would enjoy tenure only during his lifetime. Even though a ten-day ration of food was offered every year to a farmer engaged in reclamation work, the program's results were disappointing. Probably the government had grossly overestimated the amount of arable land by as much as 300,000 *chō*, and it is thought that officials may have been unduely sanguine about the amount of such land in northeastern Japan.

Although economic strain may have contributed to Prince Nagaya's difficulties in retaining control over court affairs, political opposition headed by men and women of the Fujiwara clan was probably the major cause. The first clear indication that Nagaya was losing control came in the ninth month of 927 when Lady Asukabe – Shōmu's empress and Fuhito's daughter who later became Principal Empress Kōmyō – gave birth to Prince Motoi, a child who was appointed crown prince before he reached the age of one. This was a great coup for members of the Fujiwara clan, who could now look forward to Shōmu's being succeeded by a prince born of a Fujiwara mother.

Young Prince Motoi died, however, before he reached the age of two. Emperor Shōmu soon acquired another son, named Prince Asaka, but his mother was not a Fujiwara. Meanwhile, Lady Asukabe had given birth to Princess Abe (the future Empress Kōken) but Prince Asaka was Shōmu's only son, making it likely that this child would eventually become the next emperor: a truly gloomy prospect for Fujiwara leaders. Then, amidst the intense rivalry over the question of who would follow Shōmu to the throne, Prince Nagaya was accused of plotting a rebellion, whereupon a force of military guards under Fujiwara no Umakai (694–737) surrounded Nagaya's residence. Although Prince Toneri and Prince Niitabe objected to the use of force, they could do nothing to prevent either the suicide of Prince Nagaya or the exile of seven high officials accused of taking part in the plot. An item in the *Shoku Nihongi* for the seventh month of 738 states that the charges against Nagaya were false, leaving the impression that the prince and his supporters had been victimized by Fujiwara schemes to bring about the collapse of the Nagaya regime and the reemergence of Fujiwara men to preeminent positions at court.

The Fujiwara-four's regime (729 to 737)

Immediately after Prince Nagaya's suicide, Lady Asukabe – the daughter of Fuhito and the sister of Umakai – was advanced to the position of

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empress (*kōgō*) and named Kōmyō. This title qualified her by law[25] to become a reigning empress upon the death of her imperial spouse. But according to the requirements of that same law, the title could be held only by a woman of the imperial clan. Fujiwara no Fusasaki (Fuhito's son who had been appointed minister of the center) and Lady Fujiwara no Miyako (Emperor Shōmu's mother and Fuhito's daughter) figured prominently in the maneuver by which an exception was made in Empress Kōmyō's case. Five days after she was promoted, the era name was changed to Tempyō (Heavenly Peace), an action that was undoubtedly meant to sanctify and celebrate the occasion.

Once Empress Kōmyō became Shōmu's most likely successor, the council was reconstituted. Prince Toneri was given the honorary post of acting chancellor and two of Fuhito's sons were promoted: Fujiwara no Muchimaro (680–737) to senior counselor and Fujiwara no Fusasaki (681–737) to consultant. Two years later, two more sons – Fujiwara no Umakai (684–737) and Fujiwara no Maro (695–737) – were added to the council.[26] Of the ten men who held positions in Council of State posts in 731, four were therefore sons of the deceased Fuhito, causing people to refer to the new government as "the regime of the four Fujiwara sons." Ironically, they came to power by contravening laws in a system devised largely by their grandfather Kamatari and their father Fuhito. Henceforth, such violations made it increasingly difficult for officials to preserve the state's legally defined bureaucratic structure.

After about 730, Emperor Shōmu, with at least the tacit approval of the Fujiwara-dominated council, became more active in increasing the throne's spiritual authority by patronizing the Buddhist faith. He continued to associate himself with kami rites at ancestral shrines around the country and to value Nara as a symbol of imperial authority, but he soon revealed a special interest in Buddhism by initiating the reconstruction of the Daian-ji (which was eventually to become one of "the seven great temples of Nara"), the establishment of a sutra-copying department within the principal empress's household, and the ordination of an increasingly large number of Buddhist priests.[27]

25 There were four consorts: principal empress (*kōgō*), imperial consort (*kisaki*), imperial spouse (*fujin*), and imperial concubine (*hin*). All held imperial ranks (*hon*) as stipulated in the Yōrō code and probably in the Taihō code as well. Three earlier principal empresses had occupied the throne: Suiko (593–628), Kōgyoku (642–5), and Jitō (686–97).

26 The following four Fuhito sons founded four famous branches of the Fujiwara clan: Muchimaro, the southern branch; Fusasaki, the northern; Umakai, the ceremonial; and Maro, the capital. All four sons died of smallpox in 737.

27 See Joan R. Piggott's "Todaiji and the Nara Imperium" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1987), pp. 95–97.

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The greater demand for priests probably lay behind the 731 decision by the government to abandon its order of two decades' standing that the popular Buddhist priest Gyōki (668–749) stop propagating his beliefs among the common people. Despite the ban, Gyōki continued to preach, expounding on Buddhist teachings of causality (*inga*) and retribution (*ōhō*). What seems to have irritated government officials was that poor farmers – who were relied on to pay tribute and supply labor – were being drawn into religious groups that became involved in digging irrigation ponds and ditches and in constructing roads and bridges, projects that benefited rich farmers and district supervisors more than they helped the state.[28] But after hearing in 730 that tens of thousands of Gyōki's disciples had gathered, for days on end, at places around the capital where he was preaching,[29] the authorities took a different tack, deciding that all male disciples over the age of sixty-one and all female disciples over fifty-five, could become certified priests or nuns if they really respected Buddhist teachings.[30] A few years later, after the terrible smallpox epidemic of 735–7, Gyōki and his followers were even invited to participate in the government's program of building temples and making Buddhist statues for an emerging system of state-supported temples.

During the years when the Council of State was controlled by the four Fujiwara brothers, measures were adopted for increasing the amount of cultivated rice land that could be allocated and from which tribute could be collected. The government also took steps to decrease the state's financial burden (abolishing conscription in 730), to lighten the tax burden (halving taxes in 731), to improve the living conditions of the common people (establishing charitable institutions and infirmaries), and, in 732, to reinforce its control over outlying regions (replacing the keepers of the peace around the capital with military peace officers). Such activities suggest that the Fujiwara regime continued to worry about signs of discontent among the people and instability at court.

Then in 735 Japan was hit by a smallpox epidemic that was rumored to have been introduced by a ship from Silla. As the horrible disease spread in the direction of the capital, Emperor Shōmu asked the priests at leading shrines and temples around the country to pray for relief. But the epidemic continued to spread. By the eighth month of

28 Most of what we know of Gyōki's activities can be found in the *Gyōki nempu* in Ichishima Kenkichi, comp., *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* (Tokyo: Kokushōkai, 1907), vol. 3.
29 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō 2 (730) 9/29, KT 1.123.
30 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō 3 (731) 8/7, KT 1.126.

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737, ten officials of fourth rank or higher were dead, including all four of the Fujiwara brothers (Muchimaro, Fusasaki, Umakai, and Maro) who had dominated the council for the past eight years. Some scholars have estimated that approximately one-third of the entire population perished during those two years. Not only did the four Fujiwara brothers die and the economic and social life of the people sustain serious damage, but Shōmu and his new regime were driven, more strongly than ever, to build a statewide system of Buddha worship in order to enhance the emperor's spiritual authority and to direct the power of Buddha to the protection of the state and its people.

Tachibana no Moroe's regime (737–749)

The demise of the four Fujiwara brothers was accompanied by a shift of power toward nobles closely related to the emperor and away from aristocrats belonging to such great nonimperial clans as the Fujiwara, even though Emperor Shōmu (who had a Fujiwara mother and a Fujiwara empress) continued to reign. The shift was most clearly seen in two council appointments made in 737 and 738. First, Prince Suzuka (a ranking imperial son and a younger brother of Prince Nagaya) was appointed as acting chancellor. Second, Tachibana no Moroe (684–757) was advanced to minister of the right, the very position that had been held by Fujiwara no Muchimaro before his death a few months earlier. The princely stature of Suzuka was unmistakable, but Tachibana no Moroe's court connections were also impressive. Descended from Emperor Bidatsu and a half-brother of Empress Kōmyō, Moroe was once considered a member of the imperial clan and called Prince Kazuragi. But in 736 he was removed from the imperial clan and named Tachibana no Moroe.

After being promoted to minister of the right and advanced to senior third rank, Moroe was not seriously challenged by members of the great Fujiwara clan. Indeed, the only Fujiwara on the council at the time was Fujiwara no Toyonari (704–65), Muchimaro's eldest son, who had the relatively low rank of junior fourth rank lower grade. Furthermore, all those clans that had opposed the four Fujiwara brothers – such as the Ōtomo, Saeki, and Agata-Inukai – were Moroe backers. This group, referred to as the "princely clique," wished to strengthen its anti-Fujiwara stance by having Prince Asaka (whose mother was not a Fujiwara) ascend the throne as Shōmu's successor. But as powerful as the "princely clique" had become, it was not able to keep Shōmu and his influential Empress Kōmyō from disregarding

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the candidacy of Prince Asaka and selecting their own daughter, Princess Abe (later enthroned first as Empress Kōken and then as Empress Shōtoku) for the position of crown princess, the first woman to be selected by a reigning emperor as his successor. Although the Fujiwara influence was waning within the council, the emperor and his principal empress were still able to maneuver their daughter (whose mother was both a Fujiwara and an empress) into being named as heir to the throne.

Tension and rivalry between imperial and nonimperial clans continued throughout the Moroe period, breaking into open warfare when Fujiwara no Hirotsugu (d. 740), the eldest son of Umakai, became upset over his transfer (in 738) to a low-ranking post in distant Dazai-fu. He complained that two China specialists (Kibi no Makibi and the priest Gembō) were the principal cause of the current difficulties at the capital, and so he requested their dismissal. At the same time he used his official position at Dazai-fu to mobilize troops for a rebellion. But the government dispatched an expeditionary force of seventeen thousand that soon defeated the rebels and executed Hirotsugu. As soon as Emperor Shōmu received word of the military victory, he made a tour of the eastern provinces, apparently realizing that the execution of Hirotsugu would not end the old conflict between the imperial princes and Fujiwara clansmen and hoping that his royal presence might prevent the outbreak of rebellion in other parts of the country.

Although Shōmu and the Moroe regime faced no more military uprisings, the intense rivalry continued, accounting probably for subsequent decisions to move the capital to first one site and then another. Upon completing his eastern tour, Shōmu did not return to Nara but instead proceeded to the detached palace at Kuni in the province of Yamashiro and announced a few months later that Kuni was to be the new capital. Indeed, between 741 and 745 Japan had three new capitals: first at Kuni in Yamashiro, then at Shigaraki in Ōmi, and finally at Naniwa in Settsu. Although the reasons for so many moves within a period of four years are not known, we assume that each was based on altered conditions in the continuing struggle between the Moroe regime and the Fujiwara clan. Because Tachibana no Moroe's power was centered in the southern part of Yamashiro where Kuni was located, that was undoubtedly the site preferred by him and his princely supporters. Shigaraki in the province of Ōmi, on the other hand, was in a region where the Fujiwara were strong, suggesting that the choice of Shigaraki came at a time of Fujiwara ascendancy. Finally, the move to

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Naniwa was probably made because it was a site that all the groups in and around the court could accept.[31]

One aspect of the growing struggle between Moroe's supporters and the Fujiwara clansmen was a court confrontation between two factions headed by powerful women: Retired Empress Genshō who was allied with Moroe and Empress Kōmyō who was backed by the Fujiwara. Significantly, the move in 745 of the capital to Shigaraki (the Fujiwara base) came after the appointment in 743 of Fujiwara no Nakamaro (706–64) as consultant and the death in 744 of Prince Asaka, whose candidacy for enthronement (favored by the Moroe group) had been disregarded by Shōmu and Empress Kōmyō. Understandably, suspicions soon arose that Prince Asaka's death was due to foul play by members of the Fujiwara faction.

The Moroe administration adopted a number of measures meant to alleviate the human miseries caused first by the dreadful smallpox epidemic of 735–7 and then by demands for massive amounts of material and labor to build and operate such huge Buddhist temples as Daian-ji and Yakushi-ji. A few months after gaining control of the Council of State, Moroe and his backers abolished the practice of conscripting military guards for duty in the Kyushu area (*sakimori*). This practice had also been banned early in the regime of the four Fujiwara brothers but was subsequently revived. Then in 738 the government rescinded the law that an able-bodied person from each household (a *kondei*) must be conscripted for military service, and in 739 the number of officials assigned to a district office was reduced. In fact, military forces were eliminated except for units in such strategically important provinces as Mutsu and Nagato and provinces under the jurisdiction of Dazai-fu. Private lending (*shi-suiko*) was also prohibited in 737. This measure reduced interest rates for farmers but benefited local officials who could henceforth increase their income from public loans (*kō-suiko*). Finally, in 740, local government was simplified by abolishing villages (*sato*) – systematized during the earlier Fuhito period – and creating towns (*gō*) made up of two or three villages.

Probably the most spectacular economic measure was that enacted in 743, permitting a farmer who opened up virgin land for the cultivation of rice to gain title to that land in perpetuity (see Chapter 8). This decision violated the basic *ritsuryō* principle that all land (as well as all people) belonged to the state. The new policy may have increased the

31 See Naoki Kōjiro, *Asuka Nara jidai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1975).

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amount of cultivated land and added to the state's revenue, but because only local officials and rich farmers could afford to undertake reclamation projects, it is thought that this measure accelerated the accumulation of privately owned land, making the rich even richer and gradually undermining the *ritsuryō* system.

The council's attempts to reduce the miseries of the people did not, however, halt the gradual deterioration of Tachibana no Moroe's influence in the council. After Shōmu returned to Nara – where the capital was again located after 745 – he became seriously ill. He never again enjoyed good health, and his illness fueled the old dispute over who should succeed him. Prince Suzuka, the only serious Moroe rival on the council, died during that same year. When no one was appointed to replace him as acting chancellor, the tension between the princely and the Fujiwara factions increased. At the same time, Fujiwara no Fujimaro (706–64) was rising to higher positions in the Council of State, advancing even faster after the death of Retired Empress Genshō in 748. Shōmu abdicated the following year, and his daughter Princess Abe (who had a Fujiwara mother) occupied the throne as Empress Kōken, thereby bringing the years of Moroe control to a close.

The statewide Tōdai-ji system

Another spectacular development in the mid-Nara period was the erection of an extensive Buddhist system. Historians have long appreciated the cultural significance of the Tōdai-ji compound and its huge statue of Rushana Buddha (Vairocana), and economic specialists have ferreted out evidence of the great expense incurred in building and operating this huge system. But only recently have we begun to understand why Japan's aristocrats (both imperial and nonimperial) were willing to use, over such a long period of time, a large share of their material and human resources for the support of Buddhist ceremonies and institutions (see Chapter 7).

The imperial clan had actively supported Buddhism ever since the beginning of the Asuka enlightenment at the end of the sixth century, and especially after the Great Reforms of 645. But Emperor Shōmu pressed the building of the temple system toward completion during his twenty-five year reign. His endeavors seem to have been supported by all the important individuals at court and by all three regimes that had dominated affairs while he was on the throne: the regimes of Prince Nagaya (721 to 729), the Fujiwara Four (729 and 737), and Tachibana no Moroe (737 and 749).

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The post-645 reform leaders had centered their attention on building a Chinese-style empire in Japan (see Chapter 3), apparently assuming – as did the Sui emperors and Empress Wu of the T'ang dynasty – that their authority would be materially enhanced by the construction of an impressive new capital. Even before moving to erect a grand Chinese-style capital at Nara, Japanese officials had placed Buddhist worship and Buddhist temples under imperial control. Quite early, one particularly large and spectacular temple was linked to the emperor and placed above all others; imperially appointed priests were charged with administering temple affairs; and laws were issued that brought most Buddhist functions (including the certification of priests) under the jurisdiction of the imperial court.

When considering the temple system that was nearing completion in the middle years of the Nara period, one readily notices the provincial temples (*kokubun-ji*), the great Tōdai-ji compound, and finally the Tōdai-ji's great central object of worship, the fifty-three foot statue of Rushana Buddha (Vairocana). All of these were erected at the peak of an emperor-oriented Buddhist development that had started nearly a century before.

State-supported Buddhist temples had existed in China as far back as the fifth century, and Shōmu's grandfather Temmu had ordered – nearly fifty years before the edict of 741 – the construction of Buddhist chapels (*dōjō*) in every province of the land. As early as 694, Empress Jitō had distributed copies of the Golden Light (*Konkōmyō*) Sutra and ordered that they be read early in the first month of every year. But in 741, before the country had recovered from the terrible smallpox epidemic of 735–7 and soon after the Hirotsugu rebellion of 740, Shōmu issued an edict requiring every province to build both a monastery and a nunnery where Buddhist ceremonies were to be conducted on a regular basis by certified priests and nuns and where Buddhist statues and sutras were to be kept and honored. His purpose, according to the edict, was to "protect the country against all calamity, prevent sorrow and pestilence, and cause the hearts of believers to be filled with joy."[32] The discovery of engraved tiles at provincial temple sites all over the country suggests that by the end of the Nara period every province had its own official temple, the local base of the state's emerging Buddhist system.[33]

Shōmu's edict of 743 concerning the construction of a huge gilded

32 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō 13 (741) 3/24, KT 1.163–4.
33 Hayakawa, *Ritsuryō kokka*, pp. 271–2.

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bronze statue of Buddha, though nothing new in either China or Japan, was – like the edict of 741 regarding the building of a Buddhist monastery and nunnery in every province – a prayer for the peace and prosperity of the state. But the two edicts were based on the teachings of different Buddhist sutras. Whereas the edict of 741 highlighted the Golden Light Sutra (each provincial monastery and nunnery was even given a name that included the words for that sutra), the later edict referred to the teachings of the Kegon Sutra (the statue itself was a representation of Rushana, the central Kegon Buddha). The question of why there was this shift from the Golden Light to Kegon teachings within the short span of two years is discussed in Chapter 7. Here we shall merely note that the edict of 743 invited everyone, high or low, to help meet the cost of making the statue, even if his or her contribution were no more than "one blade of grass or one clod of earth."

The casting of the statue, begun at Shigaraki in 743 but stopped and restarted at Nara two years later, was not completed until 749. Its completion was delayed by seven casting failures and the need, it is said, to obtain 338 tons of copper and 16 tons of gold.[34] Two extraordinary events in 749 have also been associated with the final stages of work on the Great Buddha: the fortuitous discovery of gold in the northern province of Mutsu just eight months before the casting was completed,[35] and a revealed message from Hachiman, a kami worshiped at the Usa Hachiman Shrine in northeastern Kyushu, stating that it wanted to be worshiped at the capital so that it could join all other "heavenly and earthly kami" in supporting the great statue-making enterprise. The first development, the discovery of gold, so delighted Shōmu that he reported the good news to major shrines around the capital and then went before the Great Buddha, attended by some five thousand priests, to read an edict in which he referred to himself "as a servant of the Three Treasures" of Buddhism and declared that the newfound gold was a "blessing bestowed on us by Rushana Buddha."[36] The oracular message from Hachiman was followed by a decision to have a portion of Hachiman's kami body (*shintai*) brought to Nara, amidst much pomp and ceremony, and enshrined near Tōdai-ji, where a Hachiman shrine still exists.[37]

34 These conclusions were reached by Joan R. Piggott on the basis of research in documents preserved in the Tōdai-ji storehouse (the famous eighth-century Shōsō-in), "Tōdaiji and the Nara Imperium," p. 128.

35 See Hayakawa, *Ritsuryō kokka*, 4.274–5.

36 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Shōhō 2 (749) 4/1, KT 1.197.

37 See Ross Bender, "The Political Meaning of the Hachiman Cult in Ancient and Early Medieval Japan" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1980).

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When the work of casting the Rushana statue was moved from Shigaraki to Nara in 745, the place selected was on the grounds of the existing Yamato provincial temple,[38] which eventually became the Tōdai-ji. As early as 748, before the statue was finished, a plan was drawn up for an audience hall (*daigokuden*) in which to house the Great Buddha. According to research by Joan Piggott, this was a building measuring 300 feet from east to west, 166 feet from north to south, and 150 feet high. A compound of about four square miles is said to have included six other halls, two pagodas, and numerous residences for priests. By the time the huge statue was dedicated in 752, the Tōdai-ji had been granted five thousand households in thirty-eight provinces to cover the construction and operating costs, providing an annual income (according to calculations by Takeuchi Rizō) equal to 146,700 bushels of unhulled rice.[39]

The dedication of the Great Buddha in 752 was an even more spectacular manifestation of the importance assigned to the new Buddhist system. Although Shōmu had become a retired emperor by this time, he was present and accompanied by his famous empress Kōmyō, his daughter Empress Kōken, seven thousand courtiers, and about ten thousand monks for what was probably the most impressive ceremony ever staged by a Japanese sovereign.[40] For the thousands of high-ranking officials in attendance, the symbolic meaning of the Tōdai-ji and the Great Buddha was underscored not only by their size and grandeur but also by their exoticism. Hayakawa surmises that the gilded statue and its great hall – with lacquered pillars, white walls, blue tiles, and brightly colored banners – had a foreign appeal as strong as that seen in the colored pictures painted, more than a century before, on the walls of the Takamatsu burial mound.[41]

Although the statewide Buddhist system continued to grow and prosper during the remainder of the Nara period, political disturbances were beginning to alter the course of Japanese history, moving it toward a break in the imperial line (no more emperors or empresses descended from Emperor Temmu) and toward the removal of the capital from Nara.

AUTHORITY CRISES

When the thirty-two-year-old daughter of Emperor Shōmu and Empress Kōmyō ascended the throne in 749 as Empress Kōken, she issued

38 See Hayakawa, *Ritsuryō kokka*, 4.272–3.
39 Piggott, "Todaiji and the Nara Imperium," p. 132.
40 Ibid., pp. 133–95. Also see Chapter 8. 41 Hayakawa, *Ritsuryō kokka*, 4.278–9.

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an edict proclaiming the start of a new era called Tempyō Shōhō, "Heavenly Peace and Victorious Buddhism." The following two decades did seem to be a time of victorious Buddhism: The Great Buddha statue was dedicated in 752; the distinguished Chinese priest Ganjin (688–763) arrived in 754 and soon performed ordination rites for the empress and her imperial father; a new temple (the Saidai-ji), meant to be as grand as the Tōdai-ji, was founded in 765; Buddhist temples were treated liberally in a 765 revision of the land-development law; and in 766 and 767 the priest Dōkyō received higher titles and offices than had ever been bestowed on a commoner.

But these years were not peaceful. The authority of the empress (on the throne for a second term as Shōtoku) was challenged in 764 by opponents who resorted to the use of armies. And five years later, her authority was challenged by a kami oracle that stated the country would be better off if the next occupant of the throne were the Buddhist priest Dōkyō. Finally, Shōtoku was replaced in 770 by a prince born into a different branch of the imperial line, and then in 784 the capital was removed from Nara, bringing the fabulous Nara period to a close.

Although the more than twenty years of the Shōmu reign outlined in the previous section were noted for two impressive building complexes (the capital city of Nara and the Tōdai-ji–centered Buddhist system), the following two decades obtained their character from activities surrounding three individuals deeply involved in a series of authority crises: (1) Shōmu's daughter (718–70), who reigned from 749 to 758 as Kōken, dominated Emperor Junnin from 758 to 764 as retired empress and then occupied the throne a second time, as Shōtoku, between 764 and her death in 770; (2) Fujiwara no Nakamaro (706–64) who ordered armies to attack imperial forces in 764; and (3) Dōkyō (d. 772) who, closely allied with Shōtoku, was the Buddhist priest selected by a Japanese kami to succeed her as Japan's next emperor.

A succession of powerful empresses

Although the Nara period emperors were stronger than those of any other period in Japanese history and Shōmu apparently dominated both sacral and secular affairs during his long reign, a close reading of the available evidence shows that the Nara period was a time of strong influence by four successive empresses (see Figure 4.4). First, Gemmei (661–721) was strong enough to block the enthronement of

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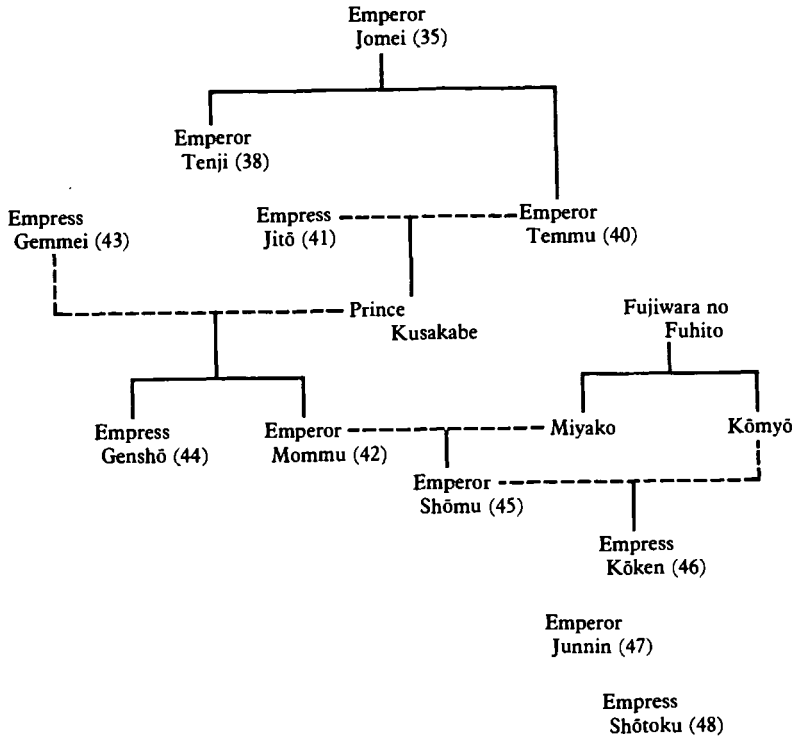

Figure 4.4. Temmu's line and Fuhito's daughters. Note: Junnin was a grandson of Temmu (no Fujiwara linkage); Kōken and Shōtoku are the same person. Dashed line indicates spousal relationship; solid line, offspring. (Reign numbers are in parentheses, as recorded in the *Gukanshō* chronology; see Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, pp. 264–78.)

Shōmu in 715, although Shōmu had been appointed crown prince in 713. She favored instead the enthronement of her own daughter Empress Genshō and apparently made it impossible for Shōmu to reach the throne until 724, three years after her death. Second, Genshō (680–748), like her mother Gemmei, consistently used her authority to have princes appointed to high positions in the council, apparently preferring a regime like the one of Tachibana no Moroe. Third, Kōmyō (701–60), as one of Fuhito's daughters, used her position to make certain that Fujiwara men received key appointments and rapid promotions. She was surely behind the arrangements that resulted in the formation of the "regime of the four Fujiwara brothers" in 729, the year she was appointed empress. But as long as Genshō was alive,

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imperial princes continued to be appointed to high-level positions, especially after the smallpox epidemic of 735–7. Only after Genshō's death in 748 did Empress Kōmyō and Emperor Shōmu succeed in getting their daughter (Kōken) enthroned as Shōmu's successor, and only then did Fujiwara aristocrats begin to rise rapidly on the bureaucratic ladder.

The fourth and most famous Nara period empress was Kōken (r. 749–58) who later reigned as Shōtoku (r. 764–70). She was – like her mother Kōmyō – an independent and strong-willed woman who apparently identified herself with the autocratic Empress Wu (r. 691–705) of China. By selecting a four-character era name at the beginning of her first reign, she seems to have been consciously modeling her rule after that of Empress Wu, as a four-character era name had appeared in China only during the Wu reign.[42] And yet we see no particularly new political currents or policies during the nine years of Kōken's first reign except for an accumulation of power by Fujiwara no Nakamaro. Possibly she did not show much independence of mind during these years because she was still in her thirties. But a more significant factor was the continuing influence of her mother, Principal Empress Kōmyō, for it was Kōmyō after all, not Kōken, who was Nakamaro's principal supporter. When Kōken stepped down from the throne in 758, she may well have thought that she could now obtain, at long last, the political leverage of a retired empress. But Kōken does not seem to have played a decisive role in public affairs until after Kōmyō's death in 760. Only then did she, as Empress Shōtoku, tangle with and destroy Fujiwara no Nakamaro, oppose and exile Emperor Junnin, and promote the Buddhist priest Dōkyō to the highest position ever held by a commoner.

The rise of Fujiwara no Nakamaro

In 743, when the capital was moved from Kuni near the Tachibana power base to Shigaraki close to important Fujiwara holdings, Nakamaro was appointed to the Council of State, largely because he was backed by his powerful Fujiwara aunt, Empress Kōmyō. Later promotions and appointments made him the leading rival of Tachibana no Moroe, supported by Retired Empress Genshō. Although Genshō died

42 Empress Wu Tse-t'ien (622–705) was Kao-tsung's consort. After the latter's death in 683, she controlled the empire as dowager empress while two of her sons occupied the throne. In 690 she had herself enthroned as sovereign empress and declared the beginning of a new dynasty. In 695 and again in 696, she adopted era names written with four Chinese characters.

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in 748 and Kōken was enthroned the following year, Tachibana no Moroe continued on as minister of the left until 756, just a year before Kōken's abdication. Nevertheless, Nakamaro and his group were becoming stronger, mainly because of the power that Nakamaro held as head of the office (the Shibi chūdai) that handled the principal empress's (Kōmyō's) affairs. This office, standing outside the bureaucratic structure defined in the Taihō administrative code, was staffed with high-ranking officials who performed increasingly important functions. Its name, similar to that of a Chinese office administering the affairs of state under Empress Wu at the turn of the eighth century, suggests that Kōmyō – who supported, and was being supported by, her ambitious nephew Nakamaro – was planning to rule Japan in the Empress Wu manner. Because Nakamaro, as head of this office, was taking responsibility for matters previously handled by the council and the council itself now included an increasingly large number of officials from the Fujiwara clan, Tachibana no Moroe's influence was in decline.

During the year 755, rivalry between the two groups – one formerly headed by Retired Empress Genshō supporting Moroe and the other by Empress Kōmyō backing Nakamaro – came to the breaking point when Moroe reportedly became bold enough at a drinking party to criticize Empress Kōken openly. Nakamaro and his party used the incident as an excuse to press for Moroe's resignation. The situation was made even riper for intrigue and conspiracy when after Shōmu's death in 756, an edict was issued elevating to crown prince a person not favored by the Fujiwara faction. Within a few days the Fujiwara leaders retaliated. Two prominent heads of the anti-Fujiwara group were arrested and placed in confinement on the charge that they had been disrespectful to the reigning empress. In the following year, Tachibana no Moroe died; a new crown prince (the future Emperor Junnin and a Nakamaro relative) was appointed; and Nakamaro was given another important extralegal ministerial position, that of *shibi naishō*.

But Nakamaro's control was not yet firm, as Tachibana no Moroe's eldest son Naramaro was assembling support for a coup. Fujiwara no Nakamaro soon got wind of the activity and hastened to stamp out Tachibana's opposition force. He had the former Crown Prince Funado executed and sent his own elder brother Toyonari (who had been minister of the right) into exile at Dazai-fu. In an apparent attempt to head off the popular discontent that had been aroused by his ruthless elimination of opponents, Nakamaro decreased from sixty to thirty the number of days a farmer had to work for the government, halved the rice assessments, and reduced other forms of tribute. In

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that same year, the Yōrō codes (incomplete at the time of Fuhito's death in 720) were promulgated, and the distinguished service of Fujiwara no Kamatari (prominent at the time of the 645 reforms) was posthumously recognized. In 758 Nakamaro moved to colonize the territory of the Ezo people to the north by building frontier posts in Mutsu and Dewa and, at about that time, to work out a plan for conquering the kingdom of Silla, even issuing an order that five hundred ships be built for an overseas expeditionary force. The events of 757 and 758 indicated to people in and around the court that the Nakamaro regime had become remarkably strong. But two unforeseen developments hastened the regime's decline and fall: the death of Empress Kōmyō in 760, and Retired Empress Kōken's decision in 762 to handle personally the really important affairs of state.

Kōken against Nakamaro

Although modern historians may have difficulty comprehending the authority that Nakamaro obtained from the support of Empress Kōmyō (Fuhito's daughter, Shōmu's empress, and Kōken's mother), the Nara aristocrats probably had no such difficulty: They undoubtedly understood the political implications of Kōmyō's death in 760. Nakamaro surely hoped or assumed that Kōken would replace her mother as his principal supporter, but by the time Kōken had yielded the throne to Junnin in 758, she had set her heart on becoming not merely the source of imperial authority (as retired empress) but also the person to exercise it. By then she had already placed under her own wing the imperial guards (*chūe-fu*) who had been under Nakamaro since 756.[43] But it was not until 762, after Junnin had occupied the throne for four years, that relations between Kōken and Nakamaro reached the breaking point.

Just how and when the rift came about is not known, but scholars generally agree that it coincided with the development of intimate relations between Kōken and Dōkyō (d. 772), a Buddhist priest who, in the fourth month of 762, used his mysterious healing powers to cure the empress of some illness. At that time the empress was forty-five years old and Dōkyō was around sixty. The nature of the intimacy is not known, but according to the *Nihon ryōiki* written at the beginning of the ninth century, "the priest Dōkyō and the retired empress shared the same pillow." In the sixth month of 762, Kōken became so irri-

43 See Sasayama Haruo, "Chūe-fu no kenkyū – sono seijishi teki igi ni kansuru," *Kodaigaku* 6 (1957): 274–302: and Naoki Kōjirō, *Asuka nara jidai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1975), pp. 221–6.

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tated with Emperor Junnin that she suddenly left the detached palace at Hora and took up residence at a Buddhist temple in Nara, where she immediately issued an edict (as retired empress) stating that "henceforth the emperor will conduct minor affairs of state, but important matters of state, including the dispensation of swards and punishments, will be handled by me."[44] Clearly, she had decided to exercise the authority that had been previously enjoyed by her mother, Empress Kōmyō.

Because Nakamaro, who had joined Kōmyō in endorsing Junnin's enthronement, was threatened by Kōken's decision, he immediately took steps to strengthen his own control: He named two of his sons (Kuzumaro and Asakari) to the council and gave two other sons military appointments, one in the capital and the other in the provinces of Echizen and Mino. But the opposition now gathering about Kōken was taking countermeasures: Fujiwara no Masaki, a Fujiwara clansman who was critical of Namakaro's policies, was appointed middle counselor, and Kibi no Makibi, an anti-Fujiwara specialist on China who had been exiled to Kyushu, was brought back to the capital and appointed supervisor of construction at Tōdai-ji. Although the sudden and sharp decline in Nakamaro's fortunes was due above all to his strained relations with Kōken and her beloved Dōkyō, Nakamaro had also alienated fellow clansmen, who were now drifting to the support of the retired empress.

By 764 Nakamaro was planning a coup d'état that would restore in a single stroke his power and prestige. Using the authority of his ministerial office, he seized control of military affairs in the provinces near the capital, dispatched additional soldiers to regions under his control, and increased the size of the provincial militia. But his plans were leaked, and Kōken and her group immediately took possession of the imperial seals and the post station bells (*ekirei*) needed to mobilize the troops. Then her commander's forces clashed with Nakamaro's guards and, within seven days, seized and executed Nakamaro. Thus the rebellion was quashed, leaving Retired Empress Kōken in full charge of state affairs.

Kōken and Priest Dōkyō

As soon as the 764 rebellion had been put down, Kōken saw to it that Dōkyō was advanced from junior Fifth to junior third Rank and ap-

44 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Hōji 6 (762) 6/3, KT 2.287.

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pointed minister prelate (*daijin zenshi*). She had Nakamaro's elder brother Toyonari – who had been exiled because he had opposed Nakamaro – brought back to the capital and reappointed as minister of the right. Then she had Emperor Junnin removed from the throne and exiled to the island of Awaji. In the edict issued at this time, she stated that she had received from her father Emperor Shōmu the authority to select and depose successors to the throne and added that Shōmu had also observed that only persons obedient to his daughter should succeed her. In this way Kōken was not only justifying the deposition of Junnin and her occupation of the throne for a second reign as Empress Shōtoku but also suggesting that someone like Dōkyō, who had been very obedient, was an appropriate successor.

Empress Shōtoku immediately added troops to her imperial bodyguards and placed them under the command of her chief military officer, Fujiwara no Kurajimaro. She also increased the number of officials in the council by adding to it clansmen who had supported her in the struggle against Nakamaro and imperial princes, Buddhist priests, and aristocrats from the provinces.[45] In 765 her administration restricted the amount of land that aristocrats and non-Buddhist institutions could develop and privately own, but the restrictions were not applied to Buddhist temples. Tacit approval was thus given for a further increase in the amount of rice land privately owned by these religious institutions (see Chapter 8).

Favoring temples in this way was only one manifestation of the administration's pro-Buddhist policy. Another can be detected in the changes made in Dōkyō's position after Nakamaro's death: In 765 he was appointed prime minister prelate (*daijōdaijin zenshi*); in 766 he was named Buddhist king (Hō-ō); and in 767 his authority was increased by the creation of an Imperial Office for the Buddhist King (Hō-ō Kyūshiki). The only other person in Japanese history to hold such high titles and offices was the famous Prince Shōtoku who, as prince regent, was designated more than a century earlier as Divine Virtue Buddhist Prince (Shōtoku Hō-ō) and Great Buddhist Prince (Hō-ō Dai-ō). We should point out, however, that Dōkyō did not gain distinction for learning or religiosity in the practice of Buddhism at an official temple. Instead, his reputation was based mainly on occult powers supposedly gained from esoteric rites performed at secluded mountain retreats. His rapid and remarkable rise to a position very near the top of the imperial government was due almost entirely to

45 Piggott, "Todaiji and the Nara Imperium," pp. 72–81.

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favors received from Empress Shōtoku, not to any broad-based support of the Buddhist priesthood.[46] As high as Dōkyō's positions were, they appear not to have given him responsibilities outside the field of religion. Even his high appointments as prime minister priest and Buddhist king suggest that he was thought of mainly as a Buddhist priest, not as an official with responsibility for secular affairs. At times he was active in programs involving the worship of both kami and Buddha, such as in the construction of temples at shrines (*jingūji*) and in the holding of Buddhist rites that were Shinto in character, but his responsibilities were consistently within the spiritual realm.

Usa Hachiman and Dōkyō

In 769, the head of the Kami Affairs Department at Dazai-fu reported that Hachiman, the famous kami worshiped at the Usa Hachiman Shrine in northeastern Kyushu, had made the following oracular statement: "If Dōkyō is made emperor, the country will become tranquil." The *Shoku Nihongi* tells us that Dōkyō was delighted to hear this but that the empress asked Wake no Kiyomaro (733–99) to find out what Hachiman had really said. The oracle message that Kiyomaro received was quite different: "No person should ascend the throne who has not been born in the imperial line."[47]

The chief priest of the Usa Hachiman Shrine may have been trying to ingratiate himself with Shōtoku and Dōkyō by passing along the first version, and Fujiwara no Nagate (714–71) and other members of the Fujiwara clan seem to have arranged for Kiyomaro to bring back the second. We do not know what really happened except that efforts to make Dōkyō the emperor were blocked. And yet Dōkyō was not punished, indicating that Shōtoku did not think that he himself had initiated, or been involved in, the plot.

In the eighth month of 770 Shōtoku suddenly died at the age of fifty-three, without having selected a successor. A succession dispute ensued. Eventually Fujiwara no Momokawa (732–79) succeeded in engineering the selection of Prince Shirakabe (grandson of Tenji) as heir to the throne. Momokawa and other Fujiwara leaders had arranged the forgery of an edict by Shōtoku that proclaimed that Shōtoku had wanted Prince Shirakabe to be her successor. But she certainly would have opposed this nomination, for only Temmu's de-

46 Piggott concluded that the priests at the various temples in the capital were actually opposed to Dōkyō's "despotic oversight." See her "Todaiji and the Nara Imperium," p. 118.

47 *Shoku Nihongi*, Jingo Keiun 3 (769) 9/25, KT 2.369.

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scendants had occupied the throne since his death in 686. Other developments point to a new power alignment: Dōkyō was removed from his high offices shortly after Shotoku's death and was exiled to the province of Shimotsuke; Prince Shirakabe was enthroned at the age of sixty-two as Emperor Kōnin; Fujiwara no Yoshitsugu (716–77) was named minister of the center; and Fujiwara no Momokawa (732–79) was promoted to consultant.

During Kōnin's reign, lasting until 781, the government devoted much effort to increasing the state's income because financial conditions had been deteriorating rapidly ever since 749, when Kōken had first occupied the throne. Unnecessary offices not listed in the administrative code were abolished, resulting in the dismissal of numerous provincial and central government officials; and all loans other than those authorized by provincial governors were banned, probably benefiting officials more than commoners. The new regime eliminated the conscription of farmers and was more severe than earlier regimes had been in attempting to control vagrancy. It also enacted some military reform, shifting the burden of military service from poor to rich farmers.

The Fujiwara leaders were also determined to upset the tradition that Temmu's descendants alone should occupy the throne, for they were convinced that any Temmu emperor or empress would continue to favor direct imperial rule and oppose control by a nonimperial clan, particularly the Fujiwara. Shortly after the beginning of Kōnin's reign, the empress (a daughter of Shōmu named Princess Igami) gave birth to Prince Osabe. The young son was soon appointed crown prince, and his mother was named empress consort. This displeased the Fujiwara. Charging the empress consort with having put a curse on the emperor, they had her demoted and Prince Osabe exiled. The details of just what transpired are not clear, but apparently Momokawa was making certain that no prince of the Temmu line would occupy the throne.

The imperial son, Prince Yamabe, that was finally selected as Kōnin's successor was definitely a descendant of Tenji, and he was enthroned as Emperor Kammu when Kōnin abdicated in 781. Although Kammu was the second Tenji-descended emperor, the struggle between the two lines' supporters continued. Not long after the death of Kōnin in 782, a plot was exposed, and a great grandson of Temmu (Kawatsugu) was charged with complicity and sentenced to death. The determination of the new leaders to keep Temmu's descendants from occupying the throne was linked with their desire to have the

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capital moved from Nara, where three strong empresses and two emperors of the Temmu line had reigned. Thus the move of Emperor Kammu (a Tenji descendant) to Nagaoka in 784 marks the close of Japan's amazing Nara period.

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CHAPTER 5

JAPAN AND THE CONTINENT

Japan's prehistory was marked by the gradual transmission of techniques and artifacts from the continental civilizations of Asia, especially China and Korea. Imported technology – the cultivation of rice in paddy fields, and bronze and iron metallurgy – enabled the Japanese to create a settled and stratified society, and diplomatic contact with foreign governments contributed to the formation of the Japanese state. Thus continental influence in prehistoric times prepared the way for the conscious adoption of sophisticated Chinese political and cultural patterns in the sixth and seventh centuries. This chapter will use archaeological findings and Chinese records to examine relations between Japan and the continent, beginning with Japan's transition to an agrarian society and ending with the dawn of the historical age.

Long before any other East Asian people, the Chinese developed the building blocks of advanced civilization: agriculture, metal technology, and a writing system. Archaeological findings in China suggest that settled farming communities (such as the Yang-shao in the Yellow River basin and the Ta-p'en-k'eng of the southeastern coast) can be dated as early as the fifth millennium B.C.[1] The Shang state, which rose in the Yellow River valley around 1750 B.C., was based on a writing system and advanced bronze technology. About a thousand years later, the Chinese began to make tools out of iron.[2] Their iron-tipped plows enhanced agricultural productivity, and iron weapons contributed to victory in war, most notably in the case of the Ch'in, the state that formed China's first empire in 221 B.C.

Chinese culture and technology often came to Japan through Korea, which adopted agriculture and metals somewhat before Japan did. By the fourth century, the Koreans were growing rice, had passed through a bronze age, and were beginning to turn to iron for weapons and tools.[3]

1 Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 3rd ed. revised and enlarged (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 83–85.

2 Ibid., pp. 209–95, discusses the Shang state, and for the use of iron, see pp. 350–57.

3 Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward M. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard–Yenching Institute, 1984), pp. 9–12, 14–16.

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Some of these developments began to spread into Japan in the fourth or third century, but it was not until the sixth century A.D. that the Japanese made extensive use of writing or attempted to form a centralized state.

Archaeologists have established the following relative chronology for the prehistoric cultures of Japan: first a Paleolithic culture, followed by the hunting-and-gathering Jōmon culture, the agrarian Yayoi culture, and finally the Burial Mound culture, which takes its name from the huge mounds that entombed its leaders. An absolute chronology, however, remains a thorny problem. Archaeological findings can establish few absolute dates, and scholars' estimates often vary by several hundred years. In this chapter, estimates of dates will be based on both archaeological and documentary evidence: carbon-14 dating, datable items imported from China or Korea, and accounts of Japan in Chinese histories. It is somewhat misleading, however, to refer to prehistoric "periods" as if they began and ended in particular years. For example, the rice cultivation that marked the beginning of Japan's Yayoi culture flourished in southwestern Japan when the northeast was still in the hunting-and-gathering stage. Therefore, although this chapter will often refer to the Jōmon or the Yayoi "periods," the reader should keep in mind such qualifications.

JAPAN AND THE CONTINENT IN THE JŌMON AND YAYOI PERIODS

The narrow stretch of ocean between the southern tip of the Korean peninsula and the northern coast of Kyushu was a natural passageway for traffic between Japan and the continent in prehistoric times. Archaeological findings indicate that the peoples of Kyushu and Korea were in contact some five thousand years ago. In addition, the oldest traces of rice cultivation in Japan, along with tools of Korean origin, have been found in northern Kyushu. Thus the sites in this region are central to a study of prehistoric contacts between Japan and the continent. Evidence from northern Kyushu sites dating from the Jōmon period to the beginning of late Yayoi times will form the basis for the first portion of this chapter.

Continental influence on the Jōmon culture

Postwar archaeologists have determined that Japan was inhabited in Paleolithic times, probably by people who crossed land bridges from

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the continent to the islands. Tribal societies developed, based on a hunting-and-gathering economy and characterized by pottery decorated with elaborate patterns, as if made with twisted cords. This "cord-pattern" pottery gave the name Jōmon to the culture that dominated the Japanese islands until the fourth or third century B.C.

Findings at Jōmon sites dating around 3000 B.C. suggest that there was some contact between the peoples of southern Korea and northern Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island and the region closest to the continent. Pottery found at the neolithic Chŭlmun ("comb-pattern") site at the Tongsam-dong shell mound in Pusan has been compared with northern Kyushu's Sobata-style pottery, an early Jōmon type. Their shapes and markings are similar, and both types were made by mixing asbestos and talc with the clay, leading some scholars to argue that Sobata pottery was derived from a Korean prototype.[4] Contact between Korea and Japan continued throughout the Jōmon age, and pottery of middle and late Jōmon types has also been discovered at Tongsam-dong. The absence of Korean pottery at middle and late Jōmon sites, however, indicates that Korean cultures exerted little influence over Japan during these periods. In fact, the Jōmon culture seems to have evolved relatively independently, with little influence from the continent.

This situation, however, changed dramatically at the end of the Jōmon age. For example, carbonized rice grains and stone implements like those of Korea's Mumun (undecorated) pottery culture have been unearthed at sites that also contain Yūsu-style pottery, a late Jōmon type. This indicates that rice growing had been transmitted from Korea, a conclusion substantiated by the discovery of argicultural tools such as axes, knives, blades with handles, and polished arrowheads at the late Jōmon Nabatake site in Karatsu City, Saga Prefecture,[5] and at Nijōmachi Magarida in Itoshima District, Fukuoka Prefecture.[6]

The Itazuke site in Fukuoka City is particularly important to the study of the transition between the Jōmon and the Yayoi cultures. Itazuke, the site of a village located on a plateau bordering wet lowlands, contains remains from both the late Jōmon and the early Yayoi

4 Kim Wŏn-gyŏng, *Han'guk kogohak kaesŏl* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1973); Esaka Teruya, "Seihoku Kyūshū chihō no Jōmon bunka to Chōsen hantō nambu no senshi bunka," *Kōkogaku jānaru* 183 (1980): 12–14.

5 Investigated by the Karatsu City kyōiku iinkai. See Kagawa Mitsuo, "Sobata bunka ni tsuite," in Karatsu wan shūhen iseki chōsa iinkai, *Matsuro koku Saga-ken Karatsu-shi Higashi Matsuura-gun no kōkogakuteki chōsa kenkyū*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Rokkaku shuppan, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 71–75.

6 Investigated by the Fukuoka Prefecture kyōiku iinkai.

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periods, sometimes in the same stratum. The oldest evidence of rice cultivation in Japan has been found at this site. Both late Jōmon Yūsu pottery and pottery of the Itazuke I type, manufactured in the early Yayoi period, are marked with imprints made by unhulled rice. Strata containing only Yūsu-style pottery – definitely from the late Jōmon period – also yield evidence of rice cultivation, including carbonized rice grains and stone axes of Korean lineage that were probably used for making wooden agricultural tools.[7] These findings indicate that the people of the Yūsu pottery culture practiced a fairly advanced form of rice cultivation.

These discoveries raise an important question: How did the techniques of rice growing come to Japan? Because there is no evidence of rice cultivation at earlier Jōmon sites, scholars believe that rice was not grown in Japan until the late Jōmon period.[8] But the Jōmon people had already begun to grow other crops, such as the root vegetables they had once obtained by gathering.[9] Rice, however, does not grow wild in the Japanese islands; thus it can be assumed that its cultivation was introduced from abroad. The most likely source is the Yangtze River basin of central China, where rice was grown in irrigated fields in prehistoric times. How rice reached Japan from the Yangtze basin is a subject of much debate, however. Some scholars argue that cultivation techniques were introduced directly from central China to both Korea and Japan simultaneously, and others believe that such techniques came from south China through the Ryūkyū island chain and the stepping-stone islands south of Kyushu. A third theory is especially convincing: that rice cultivation was first transmitted from the Yangtze basin to the Shantung peninsula, then to Korea, and finally to Japan.[10]

Similarities in early agricultural technology, based on similarities in topography and climate, suggest that rice growing may well have come to Japan by way of Korea. Among the strongest evidence is the presence of Korean stone implements at the Itazuke site. Some could have

7 Mori Teijirō and Okazaki Takashi, "Itazuke iseki," in Nihon kōkogaku kyōkai, ed., *Nihon nōkō bunka no seisei*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Tōkyōdo, 1960–61), vol. 1; Fukuoka-shi kyōiku iinkai, *Itazuke iseki chōsa gaihō: Itazuke shūhen iseki chōsa hōkoku sho 5, 1977–8 nendo: Fukuoka-shi maizō bunkazai chōsa hōkoku sho* 49 (1979); Okazaki Takashi, "Kome o chūshin toshite mita Nihon to tairiku: Kōkogakuteki chōsa no gen dankai," in *Kodai ni okeru kōeki to bunka kōryū*, vol. 13 of Ishimoda Shō et al., eds., *Kodaishi kōza* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1966), p. 209.

8 Kim Chŏng-hak, *Kankoku no kōkogaku* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1972).

9 Okazaki Takashi, "Nihon kōkogaku no hōhō" in Hirano Kunio and Okazaki Takashi, eds., *Kenkyū shiryō*, vol. 9 of *Kodai no Nihon* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1971), p. 42.

10 Okazaki, "Kome o chūshin toshite mita Nihon to tairiku," pp. 181–216. Also see Chapter 1 of this volume.

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come directly from China, as implements of the same types have been found in both China and Korea. But one type of tool, a grooved axe with a square shaft, is peculiar to Korea. On the other hand, archaeologists have found no exclusively Chinese tools at northern Kyushu sites dating from the end of the Jōmon period. Thus it seem unlikely that rice cultivation was introduced directly from China.[11]

The variety of rice grown in Japan – first in northern Kyushu and, later, all over the islands – also suggests that rice came to Japan from the Korean peninsula. Japanese rice is of the short-grained variety known as *Oryza sativa japonica*. Though both this variety and the longer-grained *indica* rice were grown in the Yangtze basin, only *japonica* is grown in Korea and Japan. Therefore, if rice had been introduced directly from the Yangtze to Japan, some *indica* grains might well have been found at Japanese sites, indicating that the type was cultivated on at least an experimental basis.[12] Furthermore, rice was grown early enough in Korea to have been transmitted to Japan in late Jōmon times. The oldest traces of rice cultivation in Korea have been found at a Mumun site at Hunam village in Kyŏnggi Province in west central Korea. Using radiocarbon dating, archaeologists have determined that rice was grown in Korea as early as the first half of the first millennium B.C.[13] The hypothesis that rice came to Japan by way of Korea is also supported by other evidence of early contact between the two people, such as similar mound-building techniques.[14]

Early Yayoi: agriculture and the use of metal

The widespread adoption of rice cultivation distinguished the Yayoi culture from the earlier Jōmon and laid the foundation for a settled society. That is, the growing of rice as the staple crop required people to settle in permanent villages, where cooperative methods of planting, irrigation, and harvesting evolved. The Yayoi rice-growing culture spread rapidly from northern Kyushu to the region of central Honshu around present-day Nagoya. There, climate and topography retarded

11 Okazaki Takashi, "Nihon ni okeru shoki inasaku shiryō: Chōsen hantō to no kanren ni furete," in Nishitani Tadashi ed., *Kōkogaku kara mita kodai Nihon to Chōsen* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1978), p. 103.

12 Okazaki, "Nihon ni okeru shoki inasaku shiryō," p. 102.

13 Kim Won-gyŏng, "Discoveries of Rice in Prehistoric Sites in Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 41 (May 1982): 515.

14 Matsuo Teisaku, *Kita Kyūshū shisekibo no kenkyū* (Saga: Matsuo Teisaku sensei kanreki kinen jigyōkai, 1957); Mori Teijirō, "Nihon ni okeru shoki no shisekibō" in Kim Che-wŏn hakushi koki kinen ronsō henshū iinkai, ed., *Kim Che-wŏn hakushi koki kinen ronsō* (Seoul: Ŭlyumunhwasa, 1969), pp. 60–67.

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the northward advance of agriculture, and for a time, northern Japan remained a society of hunters and gatherers.

The introduction of metal technology from the continent enhanced agricultural production, influenced methods of warfare, and helped create a stratified society in which elites possessed metal implements, weapons, and jewelry. Metal culture, like the growing of rice, was introduced to Japan from Korea. Archaeological findings indicate that by the third century B.C., the Koreans had created an advanced metal culture. Iron and bronze weapons, agricultural tools, and datable coins had been introduced from the northeastern Chinese state of Yen. Bronze items from the Scytho-Siberian culture of the Eurasian steppe – horse trappings, for example – have also been found at Korean sites.[15] The Koreans first learned techniques of casting iron and bronze and, later, of forging iron, thus enabling them to manufacture their own metal weapons and tools. Some of these items were introduced into northern Kyushu.[16]

Northern Kyushu's proximity to the Asian continent allowed the Japanese to circumvent the stages through which a metal culture typically evolves. In China, for example, a sophisticated bronze culture developed in the Shang dynasty, producing weapons and intricately decorated vessels. The use of iron came next: Cast iron was first used in the seventh or sixth century B.C., and then forged iron took precedence in the Warring States period (ca. 403–221 B.C.).[17] The Japanese, on the other hand, may have begun with forged iron items imported from Korea.[18] The use of bronze seems to have come later, and the Japanese did not go through a cast-iron stage. Findings at early Yayoi sites in Kyushu include items made of forged iron, but bronzes do not appear until the end of the period.

Iron implements may even have come to Japan as early as the late Jōmon age. The tip of a forged-iron blade has been discovered at Saitoyama, Kumamoto Prefecture, in a shell mound that contained both late Jōmon Yūsu and early Yayoi Itazuke I–style pottery. The blade appears to be that of an axe with a socket for the insertion of a wooden handle, and it was probably manufactured in China or Korea.[19] Other findings that point to the early use of iron include frag-

15 Oda Fujio, "Tekki," in Tateiwa iseki chōsa iinkai, ed., *Tateiwa iseki* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 1977), p. 240; William E. Henthorn, *A History of Korea* (New York: Free Press, 1974), pp. 15–16.

16 Mori Kōichi, "Kōkogaku kara mita tetsu," in Mori Kōichi, ed., *Tetsu* (Tokyo: Shakai shisōsha, 1974), pp. 21–22.

17 Oda, "Tekki," p. 240. 18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.; Mori, "Kōkogaku kara mita tetsu," pp. 20–21.

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ments of daggers found at two early Yayoi sites, one in Kumamoto and one in Yamaguchi Prefecture.[20] Iron articles imported from Korea during the Yayoi period included weapons such as halberds, swords, spears, daggers, and arrowheads and tools such as axes and knives. For the most part, these items were best suited to everyday use, in warfare or in farming, as were the iron implements made later in Japan.

Bronzes were first imported from Korea at the end of the early Yayoi period. Imported bronzes – including swords, spears, mirrors, and bracelets – have been found at a number of burial sites in northern Kyushu. At the Ukikunden site in Karatsu City, Saga Prefecture, archaeologists found a burial ground where bodies were interred with bronzes in large urns, a common Yayoi practice. Furthermore, the bronzes found at this site resemble those cast in Mumun Korea. Such items include swords, spears, and mirrors incised on the back with patterns of fine lines and with two or more knob handles.[21] Bronzes of this type, discovered at early Yayoi sites in Fukuoka and Saga prefectures, suggest close and continuing contacts between Korea and northern Kyushu. Discoveries at some dozens of sites in western Japan (Tsushima Island and Saga, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Yamaguchi, and Shimane prefectures) have also yielded pottery in the Korean Mumun style, along with native Japanese Yayoi period ware, leading some scholars to believe that Koreans had immigrated to Japan and had set up household there.[22]

Middle Yayoi

Japan's close relations with Korea continued throughout the middle Yayoi years. Sites at Okamoto-chō in Kasuga City, Fukuoka Prefecture, and Yasunagata in Tosu City, Saga Prefecture, have yielded a number of bronze swords and spears of Korean origin.[23] Such items, along with the techniques to produce them locally, were transmitted eastward, enabling people as far east as the Kinai District of central Honshu to cast their own bronze implements. Conspicuous among the Kinai bronzes were bells (*dōtaku*) patterned after Korean horse trap-

20 Mori, "Kōkogaku kara mita tetsu," pp. 20–21. See also Chapter 1 of this volume.

21 Investigations were conducted in 1957, 1965, and 1966. See Kondō Kyōichi, "Dōken, dōbō, dōka," in *Matsuro koku*, 1.398–409.

22 Gotō Naoshi, "Chōsenkei mumon doki," in Mikami Tsugio hakushi shōju kinen ronbunshū henshū iinkai, *Mikami Tsugio hakushi shōju kinen ronbunshū: Tōyōshi kōkogaku ronshū* (Tokyo: Hōyū shoten, 1979).

23 Investigated by the Tosu City kyōiku iinkai.

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pings but much larger in size. These were probably ceremonial items buried in village agricultural rites.

Yayoi culture was profoundly affected by changes on the Asian continent: the establishment in 206 B.C. of the Former Han dynasty, China's first stable and enduring empire, and the Chinese invasion of Korea less than a century later. In 109–108 B.C., armies of the Han emperor Wu-ti invaded the Wiman Chosŏn kingdom, centered in the present P'yŏngyang region, and established four military garrisons in northern Korea.[24] The administrative center was the capital of the Lo-lang colony, located in the vicinity of the old Chosŏn capital. Archaeological remains of Lo-lang dating from the Former Han, Later Han, and Wei dynasties have been found across the Taedong River from P'yŏngyang. These remains, including grave sites and remnants of the earth ramparts that once surrounded the city,[25] indicate that the inhabitants of Lo-lang – many of whom were Chinese immigrants or their descendants – wrote with Chinese characters, built Chinese-style roofed buildings, and used implements made of iron. In short, the urban culture of China had been transmitted to northwestern Korea.

Through Lo-lang and another outpost established later at Tai-fang near present-day Seoul, the Chinese established contacts with the Yayoi people. The first description of Japan in written history appears in the *Han shu*, a Chinese history completed by Pan Ku in about A.D. 82. According to this account, the "Wa" people living on islands in the ocean near Lo-lang "are divided into one hundred countries. Each year envoys from the Wa bring tribute [to Lo-lang]."[26] More details about the Wa can be found in the *Wei chih*, compiled in the third century.[27] This account, which will be examined in detail later in this chapter, includes a lengthy description of a Chinese delegation's visit to Wa. The report of this and other missions are substantiated by archaeological findings at northern Kyushu sites, several of which correspond to the Wa "countries" cited in the *Wei chih*.

Northern Kyushu sites of the middle Yayoi period contained bronzes of Chinese manufacture, transmitted through Lo-lang.[28] It

24 Lee, *A New History of Korea*, pp. 19–20.

25 Sekino Tadashi, *Heijō fukin ni okeru Rakurō jidai no funbo, Chōsen Sōtoku-fu koseki chōsa tokubetsu hōkoku* 1 (Seoul: Chōsen Sōtoku-fu, 1919); Sekino Tadashi, *Rakurō jidai no iseki, Chōsen Sōtoku-fu koseki chōsa tokubetsu hōkoku* 4 (2 vols.) (Seoul: Chōsen Sōtoku-fu, 1927).

26 Pan Ku, *Han shu* (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1964), vol. 28B, p. 1658.

27 Ch'en Shou yü, *San-kuo chih* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959), vol. 30, pp. 854–58, trans. Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (South Pasadena, Calif.: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), pp. 8–20.

28 Komai Kazuchika, *Rakurō gunchi shi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku bungakubu kōkogaku kenkyū-shitsu, 1965).

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seems likely that Japanese delegations visited Lo-lang and returned with these items, including mirrors that date from Former Han. These mirrors seem to have been especially prized by the Japanese, who often placed them in large burial urns. The discovery of datable Chinese mirrors adds precision to the dating of Japanese sites and allows us to define the middle Yayoi period as the first century B.C. and the early part of the first century A.D.

Important middle Yayoi burial-urn sites in northern Kyushu include (1) Ōmagari (Higashi Seburi village, Kanzaki District, Saga Prefecture), which contained a bronze mirror from the late Former Han;[29] (2) Mine (Futsukaichi, Fukuoka Prefecture), where a narrow bronze sword and a mirror dating from the middle of the Former Han were found in 1857; (3) Higashi Oda Mine (Yasu, Asakura District, Fukuoka Prefecture), where a mirror from the late Former Han and a bronze sword were found in 1929;[30] and (4) Kashiwazaki Tajima (Karatsu, Saga Prefecture)[31] (thought to correspond to Matsuro, one of the Wa "countries" visited by the third-century Chinese delegation), which yielded a Former Han bronze mirror.

These abundant findings make several other northern Kyushu sites particularly important to a study of connections between Japan and the continent. For example, when the Mikumo site (Maebara, Itoshima District, Fukuoka Prefecture) was first discovered in 1822, it produced a number of items of continental origin, along with a Yayoi burial urn. According to reports written at the time, these findings included Korean-style bronze swords, spears, halberds, glass beads, and thirty-five Former Han bronze mirrors of various sizes, all but two dating from the dynasty's later years.[32] All of the mirrors except one, however, have been lost. The site was rediscovered in 1974, but the Yayoi urn had been removed. Similar articles were found, however, in another burial urn nearby. These included twelve glass and one jadeite *magatama* (comma-shaped ritual jewels) and ten mirrors, nine from the late Former Han and one from the dynasty's middle years. Another important middle Yayoi site is at Sugu Okamoto (Kasuga City, Fukuoka Prefecture), thought to correspond to the country of Na

29 Saga-ken kyōiku iinkai, *Futazukayama: Saga tōbu chūkaku kōgyō danchi kensetsu ni tomonau maizō bunkazai hakkutsu chōsa hōkokusho: Saga-ken bunkazai chōsa hōkokusho* no. 46 (1979).

30 Nakayama Heijirō, "Kurisugata tekken oyobi zenkanshiki kyō no shinshiryō," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 17 (1927): 1–18.

31 Saga-ken kyōiku iinkai, *Kashiwazaki isekigun: Saga-ken bunkazai chōsa hōkokusho,* No. 53 (1979).

32 Aoyagi Tanenobu and Kashima Kyuheita, *Ryūen koki ryakukō, hoko no ki* (Tokyo: Bunken shuppan, 1976); Fukuoka-ken kyōiku iinkai, *Ihara Mikumo iseki hakkutsu chōsa gaihō: Shōwa 49 nendo* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka-ken kyōiki iinkai, 1975).

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mentioned in the *Wei chih*. Materials discovered in 1899 in a burial urn from a dolmen grave site include bronze swords, spears, halberds, glass beads, and fragments of thirty-odd Han mirrors dating from the middle to late Former Han.[33]

The Tateiwa site at Iizuka City, Fukuoka Prefecture, is rich in objects imported from the continent and preserved in burial urns. Though the site includes strata from the entire Yayoi age, its most significant findings are from the middle period. There are thirty storage pits containing carbonized cereal grains, indicating that Tateiwa was the location of a farming village where both rice and millet were grown. The village was also a center for the production and distribution of stone tools made from local materials. Iron agricultural tools were produced there as well, and later, iron was forged and bronze items cast. The village was clearly prosperous: Its chiefs had the economic and political power to obtain the continental goods that have been found in burial urns at the site. Moreover, the spread of continental articles to the environs of Tateiwa suggests that the village was the nucleus for regional trade and development.[34]

Some thirty-nine burial urns, mostly from the later years of the middle Yayoi period, were discovered at Tateiwa in the mid-1960s. Significant findings include weapons of bronze and iron, iron woodworking tools, and a set of tubular glass beads. The skeleton of a young man was found in one of the urns. On his right forearm were fourteen bracelets made of *gohoura* shells, a spiral conch shell common to the south-seas region. Ten mirrors cast in the late Former Han were also found at the site, six of them in a single urn. These findings indicate that goods were exchanged with people of the south seas as well as with the Chinese and the Koreans at Lo-lang.

Though the people interred in the urns at Tateiwa were not buried as grandly as were the chiefs of the later Burial Mound period, the quality of the grave goods suggests that they were powerful leaders. For instance, one urn contains six especially fine mirrors. Three of them are decorated with a pattern of concatenated arcs and the others with concentric rings. Both types are inscribed with poems written in Chinese characters – poems that the Yayoi people, still illiterate, could not read. The poems include selections from the *Ch'u tzu*, a

33 Nakayama Heijirō, "Sugu Okamoto shutsudo no kyōhen kenkyū," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 18 and 19 (1928–29); Umehara Sueji, *Sugu Okamoto hakken no kokyō ni tsuite, Chikuzen Sugu shizen iseki no kenkyū: Kyōto teikoku daigaku kōkogaku kenkyū hōkoku*, 11 (Kyoto: Kyōto teikoku daigaku, 1930).

34 Okazaki Takashi, "Ketsugo," in *Tateiwa iseki*, pp. 384–386, 400.

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collection compiled in the Former Han dynasty and enlarged in the Later Han.[35]

The discovery of large numbers of Chinese mirrors at middle Yayoi burial sites in northern Kyushu indicates that mirrors functioned as symbols of political and religious authority. This contention is supported by the way in which mirrors were buried and by evidence found in Japanese folklore.

The inclusion of a large number of mirrors in a single burial urn was peculiar to northern Kyushu in the Yayoi period. Mirrors were not generally used as grave goods at this time in other regions of Japan, even in the Kinai, where the practice became common in the Burial Mound age.[36] Nor does the northern Kyushu practice parallel that of the Korean peninsula. Though mirrors have been found at Lo-lang, none are from the Former Han, and seldom was more than one mirror found in a single Lo-lang burial plot. By contrast, one urn at Tateiwa contained six Former Han mirrors, and more than thirty apiece have been found in single urns at Sugu Okamoto and at Mikumo. This suggests that the people buried in the urns were community leaders whose political authority was symbolized by the large number of imported mirrors that they had obtained and had taken to their graves.[37]

Mirrors such as those found at Tateiwa were probably used in shamanistic ritual.[38] Legends recorded in the eighth-century Japanese chronicles *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* point to the ritual importance of mirrors in shamanistic sun worship. When Amaterasu, the kami (deity) of the sun, shut herself up in a dark cave and refused to show her face, a mirror was used to lure her out.[39] In a later *Nihon shoki* episode, Amaterasu declared the mirror to be a symbol of herself.[40] Moreover, some of the clay images (*haniwa*) found at Burial Mound grave sites include representations of shamans holding mirrors. Because the leaders of Yayoi communities derived their authority in part from their shamanistic role, the mirrors found at northern Kyushu

35 Mekada Makoto, trans., *Shih ching: Ch'u tz'u*, vol. 15 of *Chūgoku koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1969).

36 Tanaka Migaku, *Kokyō*, No. 178 of *Nihon no bijutsu* (Tokyo, Shibundo, 1981), p. 18.

37 Okazaki, "Ketsugo," p. 396. 38 Tanaka, *Kokyō*, p. 18.

39 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1 of Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 67, pp. 112–17; trans. W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (hereafter cited as Aston) (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pt. 1, pp. 43–49; *Kojiki*, NKBT 1.80–81, trans. Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, and Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1969), pp. 83–85.

40 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.152–3; Aston, 1.83.

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gravesites probably symbolized that authority, as well as the wealth sufficient to obtain foreign goods.

Like mirrors, bronze weapons also had ritual value. Several *Nihon shoki* tales emphasize the sacred character of spears. When the kami Izanagi and Izanami thrust their "jewel-spear of heaven" into the ocean, the brine that fell from its tip formed the islands of Japan.[41] Amaterasu's grandson, dispatched from heaven to Japan, also was given a spear to "rule the land" and to "subdue it to tranquillity."[42] The sizes and shapes of spears cast in middle Yayoi Japan, moreover, suggest that they had a ritual function. These, in contrast with the small spears imported from Korea in the early Yayoi period, ranged in length from fifty to ninety centimeters, too large and unwieldly for combat. Some were placed in graves as ritual objects that symbolized authority and power, but the longest were buried elsewhere, as if for some religious purpose.[43]

The findings at Tateiwa indicate that as the Yayoi period progressed, iron articles began to replace both bronze weapons, no longer very functional, and common stone weapons and tools. This development raises two questions: When were iron goods first manufactured in Japan, and where did the material come from – from imported ingots or from Japanese materials?[44] Some of the iron articles found at Tateiwa, such as ring-handled knives and daggers, were apparently imported from Lo-lang. But long halberds, some more than fifty centimeters, have no continental prototypes, suggesting that they were made in Japan, perhaps from imported ingots. In other words, the manufacture of iron articles may have begun in the middle Yayoi period. The blacksmiths, like the later artists and technicians who played such an important role in seventh- and eighth-century Japan, may have been immigrants from the continent.[45] Other findings at northern Kyushu sites indicate that the Yayoi Japaneses first imported continental goods and then used imported materials to make their own copies. For instance, both continental and native glass products have been found at Tateiwa, Sugu Okamoto, and Mikumo. Native products were probably first made in the middle Yayoi period, using recycled glass, that is, broken objects melted

41 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.80–81; Aston, 1.11.

42 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.140–41; Aston, 1.69. Also see Mizuno Seiichi, Higuchi Takayasu, and Okazaki Takashi, *Tsushima, Genkai ni okeru zettō: Tsushima no kōkogaku-teki chōsa*, vol. 6 of *Tōhō kōkogaku sōkan otsu shū* (Tokyo: Tōa kōkogakkai, 1953), p. 28.

43 *Tateiwa iseki*, Charts 2 and 3 following p. 192; Okazaki, "Ketsugo," p. 392.

44 Ibid., p. 392. 45 Ibid., p. 393.

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down and reused.[46] The manufacture of iron articles may have a similar history.

The Tateiwa community was probably supported first by the growing of rice and millet, later by the maufacture and distribution of stone tools, and later still, by the forging of iron implements and the casting of bronzes. The leaders of Tateiwa – and other communitites like it in northern Kyushu – maintained contacts with Lo-lang in order to obtain valuables such as mirrors, which they used as symbols of their authority. Thus it seems that community leaders had mustered considerable wealth and political power: enough, perhaps, to extend their authority over small regions the size of a present-day district.[47] The process of political consolidation, based in part on the control of continental imports and technology, led to the formation of the petty states that characterized the late Yayoi period.

Late Yayoi: diplomatic exchanges with China

By the first century A.D., the small states of northern Kyushu had begun to establish diplomatic contacts with China. The increased trade that resulted stimulated the flow of goods and technology to those already in power. In addition, rulers who were recognized by the Chinese court rose in authority and stature among their own people. Thus foreign relations played an important part in stabilizing the political situation in Yayoi Japan and contributed to the further consolidation of political power.

Diplomatic contacts between the Yayoi states and the Chinese court are recorded in Chinese sources and substantiated by archaeological findings. According to an item dated A.D. 57 in the *Hou Han shu* (The history of the Later Han, written about 445), Emperor Kuang-wu presented a seal and a ribbon to the ruler of the Wa state of Na, thought to have been located near present Fukuoka City.[48] In 1784 a gold seal, inscribed with the motto "the king of Na of Wa of Han," was discovered underneath a boulder at Shikanoshima in Fukuoka.[49] The

46 Ibid. 47 Ibid., p. 400.

48 "[Representatives of] the country of Na in Wa brought tribute to the court in the Chien-wu era (A.D. 25–55) and the second year of the Chung-yuan era (A.D. 57). The messengers called themselves *ta-fu* [a title indicating a middle-ranking official]. [They came from] the extreme southern sea [coast] of Wa." See Fan Yeh, *Hou Han shu* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1955), vol. 85, p. 2821.

49 Kamei Nammei, "Kin'in no ben," in Kin'in iseki chōsadan, *Shikanoshima* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka shiyakushō, 1975).

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seal, with a knob in the form of a serpent, is nearly square and measures about 2.35 centimeters across.[50]

There is strong evidence of this seal's authenticity. When measured with a ruler from the beginning of the Later Han dynasty, the surface of the seal is just about one *ts'un* square – in other words, a standard linear unit in the Chinese measuring system of that time.[51] The inscription on the seal corresponds to that on seals given to the rulers of other independent states.[52] Although the serpent-shaped knob is rather unusual, seals with similar knobs were presented to "barbarian" states south of China in the Han, Wei, and Chin dynasties.[53]

According to the *Hou Han shu,* the seal and ribbon were presented to the delegation from Na in return for tribute offered to the court. That is, the Chinese regarded Na as a tributary state. In the official Chinese view, states outside the Chinese empire owed homage to the emperor, and if they sought to establish diplomatic relations with the court, they had to do so as tributaries, not as sovereign states. The exchange of goods and delegations was seen in this light: Foreign states offered tribute to the Chinese court in return for gifts and for recognition of the legitimacy of the foreign ruler and of the state itself. Thus the Chinese empire obtained foreign goods without compromising its view of itself as superior and self-sufficient. Foreign rulers, on the other hand, obtained valuable Chinese objects that could be used as symbols of power or distributed among followers as inducements or rewards. In addition, recognition by the great Chinese empire undoubtedly bolstered a ruler's legitimacy and strengthened his claims to hegemony over neighboring territory.

The gold seal was probably not the Chinese emperor's only gift to the king of Na, who no doubt received bronze mirrors and other valuable articles as well. In fact, the northern Kyushu sites have yielded quite a few mirrors dating from the Wang Mang interregnum and the beginning of Later Han.

According to records dated between 1781 and 1789, a number of such mirrors were found at the Ihara site at Maebara, Itoshima District, Fukuoka Prefecture. The mirrors and several swords were discovered in a jar thought to have been a burial urn.[54] Rubbings of the mirrors reveal that all were cast in the same pattern: Raised borders marked off a square surrounding a single knob, and images of four mythological beasts (the deities of the four directions: the azure

50 Okazaki Takashi, " 'Han Wa Nakoku ō' kin'in no sokutei," *Shien* 100 (January 1968): 90–99.
51 Ibid. 52 Ibid., p. 272. 53 Ibid., p. 271. 54 Aoyagi and Kashima, *Ryūen koki ryūkō.*

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dragon, the white tiger, the red sparrow, and the tortoise with a serpent wound around it) were arranged around the square. The eighteenth-century records note that the swords, made of iron, had been badly damaged by rust and that three *magatama* also were discovered at the site.

Additional Chinese mirrors made in the same periods have been unearthed, along with other late Yayoi articles, at the Sakura no Baba site (Karatsu, Saga Prefecture). A coffin made from two burial urns joined at the mouth contained twenty-six barbed bronze bracelets, three comma-shaped bronze ornaments, small jewels, a fragment of an iron sword, and two mirrors.[55] On both mirrors, raised lines mark off a square surrounding a central knob; one of the mirrors is also decorated with patterns of floating clouds and images of the four directional deities. The designs indicate that the mirrors were imported from China in or about the first century A.D. The ornaments, however, were probably made in Japan. The bracelets were modeled on ornaments made from *gohoura* shells, and the comma-shaped articles resemble the *suijigai*, another south-seas shellfish. The only weapon is the iron sword; there are no bronze swords or spears.[56]

The findings at Shikanoshima, Ihara, and Sakura no Baba mark the beginning of the late Yayoi period. Artifacts such as the gold seal and Later Han mirrors allow us to surmise that the period began sometime between the latter half of the first century A.D., when the seal was presented to the king of Na, and the early years of the second century.[57] During these years, the Japanese manufactured most of their own bronzes, and except for mirrors, bronze imports were rare. Tools were commonly made of iron, and weapons made of iron began to replace those of stone, first in northern Kyushu and then elsewhere in Japan. Political leaders consolidated their control over substantial territory and represented themselves as "kings" to foreign observers. The states of "Wa" became part of the Chinese tribute system of trade and diplomatic relations.

This discussion of continental influence during the Jōmon and Yayoi periods has been based largely on the results of archaeological investigations at northern Kyushu sites. The rich store of continental imports from the early and middle Yayoi periods has come primarily

55 Haraguchi Shōzō, "Saga-ken Sakura no Baba iseki," in Nihon kōkogaku kyōkai, *Nihon nōkō bunka no seisei* (Tokyo: Tokyōdō, 1960), vol. 1.

56 Okazaki, "Nihon kōkogaku no hōhō," p. 38.

57 For a discussion of the Later Han mirrors found at Tateiwa, see Okazaki Takashi, "Kagami to sono nendai," in *Tateiwa iseki*, pp. 336–49.

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from northern Kyushu; there are few Han mirrors, for example, at contemporary sites in the Kinai. Eventually, however, continental influence began to spread northward: Late Yayoi sites in the Kinai have yielded an abundance of Chinese mirrors or their Japanese imitations. Other items, such as bracelets made of south-seas shells or their bronze and stone replicas, were also carried to the Kinai, and in the Burial Mound period, such items were transmitted as far as the Kantō region of eastern Japan.

THE "COUNTRY" OF YAMATAI IN THE LATE YAYOI PERIOD

According to Chinese records compiled in the late third century, Japan (the land of Wa) was composed of a number of small states, thirty of which maintained relations with the Chinese court. One of these states, Yamatai, maintained hegemony over its neighbors. Yamatai and other "Wa" states are described in detail in the *Wei chih*, compiled by Ch'en Shou-yü (233–97) as part of the *San-kuo chih* (History of the Three Kingdoms).[58] The *Wei chih* account of the Wa people appears in a chapter on "eastern barbarian" peoples that also describes the Puyŏ of northern Manchuria, the eastern Okchŏ of northeast Korea, and the Samhan (three Han tribes: the Mahan, Pyŏnhan, and Chinhan) of southern Korea. The chapter provides valuable data on the political organizations, social systems, and customs of these people.

In his introduction to the chapter, Ch'en Shou-yü explained that the Chinese sometimes dispatched embassies, accompanied by interpreters, to countries to the east. His source for his description of Yamatai and its neighbors was the report of such an embassy. The *Wei chih* account also describes tributary missions from Wa to the Wei court.

Though several of Yamatai's subordinate states have been located, no general agreement has been reached on the location of Yamatai itself.[59] Scholars have spent much time and effort on this question, as a satisfactory answer would help determine how far the third-century Japanese had progressed in the process of political consolidation that

58 Ch'en Shou-yü, *San-kuo chih*, vol. 30, pp. 854–8, trans. Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, pp. 8–20. Also see Ikeuchi Hiroshi, *Man–Sen shi kenkyū, jōsei hen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1951); Inoue Hideo, *Kodai Chōsen* (Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 1972); Yi Pyŏng-su, *Han'guk kodaesa*, trans. Kim Sa-yŏp, *Kankoku kodaishi*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Rokkō shuppan, 1979).

59 Since the end of the Edo period, many theories have been advanced concerning the Wei account of the Wa people and Yamatai. Leading theories are summarized in Saeki Yūsei, *Yamatai koku kihon ronbunshū*, vol. 1 of *Sōgen gakujutsu sōsho* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1981); and in Mishina Shōei, *Yamatai koku kenkyū sōran* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1970).

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preceded the formation of a unified Japanese state. The two regions favored for the location of Yamatai are the Kinai, where Japan's central government was finally established, and northern Kyushu, the most advanced region in the early and middle Yayoi periods and the closest to the Asian continent.

[*Translator's note:* Recent archaeological findings at the northeastern Kyushu site of Yoshinogari, located in the town of Kanzaki in Saga Prefecture, conform in several important ways to details of the *Wei chih* account. Some scholars have concluded, therefore, that Yoshinogari is probably the nucleus of one of the "countries" that the Chinese mentioned. Until the excavation at Yoshinogari, the largest-known Yayoi villages were in the Kinai region; indeed, the absence of Kyushu sites analogous to the Kinai sites was one of the Kyushu theory's main weaknesses. The village and its adjacent burial mound occupy an area of more than twenty-five hectares, making Yoshinogari the largest Yayoi community discovered so far and thereby eliminating one drawback of the Kyushu theory. In addition, archaeologists have found the first physical evidence to corroborate certain details in the *Wei chih* account: postholes that seem to be those of a stockade and two watchtowers, perhaps like the ones that appear in the description of the compound of Yamatai's ruler.

The village was probably established at the end of the early Yayoi period and then inhabited continuously throughout Yayoi times. The importance of the community is indicated by the number of its dwellings, its large collection of stoutly constructed storehouses, and its perimeter defenses: the aforementioned stockade and an outer moat that surrounded the village and burial mound. By early 1989, when the preliminary reports were issued, archaeologists had discovered remains of some 350 dwellings, including 280 late-Yayoi pit dwellings; the village may have included as many as 100 dwellings at a single time. Other findings include 50 storage pits; 60 raised-floor storehouses from the late Yayoi period; 2,350 graves, including 2,000 urn burials; and numerous pottery utensils and items made of stone, glass, shell, bronze, and iron. The extension of the outer moat to its final length of one kilometer – and thus the expansion of area under the control of village chieftains – probably took place in the second half of the middle Yayoi period. A double inner moat enclosing the central portion of the village is thought to date from the late Yayoi age.

Archaeological findings indicate that the community was prosperous and technologically advanced, especially in the middle and late

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Yayoi periods. Items discovered in these strata include bronze swords, fragments of Later Han and Japanese mirrors, glass beads, and two molds for casting bronzes. The product of one is uncertain, but the other was used to manufacture a shield ornament with hooked projections (*tomoe*) surrounding a circular center. Examples of this ornament, peculiar to Japan, have been found in Kyushu, Shikoku, and the Kinai region, but until the Yoshinogari discovery, no mold for the item had been found. The community at Yoshinogari, in other words, had obtained prestigious items manufactured abroad and had learned the continental techniques to produce such items for themselves. The excavation of the moat and the reclamation of hilly land for rice fields also demanded advanced engineering skills, and the burial mound, a two-tiered structure dating from the middle Yayoi period, was made with sophisticated construction techniques surprising for the time.

The burials in the mound indicate the development of a stratified society and strong local leadership. The main occupant of the mound, interred in a large urn found near the center of the upper tier, was no doubt a powerful village chieftain, possibly the community's "first ancestor." Three other urns in the upper tier are pointed so that their occupants faced the central urn, suggesting the importance of the person buried in it. Special rituals honoring dead chieftains may have been performed at a center just south of the mound, marked off by a shallow ditch and two structures perhaps similar to the *torii* at Shinto shrines. The mound itself is approached by a path lined on either side by burial urns, perhaps those of the chieftains' retainers. The tidy arrangement of many of the graves and their apparent relationship to the mound and its central occupant point to a considerable degree of regulatory power on the part of community leaders.

At the edge of the graveyard are several pits containing fragments of pottery utensils, probably ritual funeral vessels. Grave goods in the burial urns include beads of various shapes, items of bronze and iron, and bracelets made of *imogai* and *gohoura* shells, an indication of commerce with people of the south seas, where these shellfish can be found. Perhaps the most interesting grave goods were found in one of the urns in the upper tier of the mound: a bronze sword with a slender blade and a transverse handle, and tubular glass beads of a startling blue color, including two over 6.5 centimeters in length, the largest yet discovered at a Yayoi site. The inside of the urn is colored red with cinnabar, no doubt an expensive item for the time, and the sword and the beads are unusual objects for this period, indicating the high status of the occupant of the urn.

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Discoveries at Yoshinogari provide evidence of the warfare that often accompanies the development of agricultural societies. The size of the moat (6.5 meters deep and 3 meters wide) and the existence of the stockade and watchtowers indicate that the community was sometimes under siege, threatened perhaps by warfare as mentioned in the *Wei chih* account. Among the skeletons in the burial urns are one without a head, one with a broken thighbone, and one whose body was apparently pierced by a dozen arrows: all indications of violent death, possibly in battle.

Until the Yoshinogari site has been completely investigated, scholars will be unable to assess fully its importance to the Yamatai question. Other conclusions are more certain, however. As Mori Kōichi observed, scholars examining the routes of transmission of continental culture must now pay more attention to the Ariake coastal region, where Yoshinogari is located. In particular, the Yayoi Japanese of that region may have been in direct contact with the people of Jiangnan in east central China. More generally, the community at Yoshinogari was certainly an important center of wealth, power, and the absorption of continental culture in late Yayoi times.]

Scholars have based their arguments (regarding the location of Yamatai) on texts of the *Wei chih* printed in the twelfth century.[60] Although these printed texts are probably accurate copies of the handwritten manuscripts that preceded them, the manuscripts themselves may have contained a number of copying errors that are causing problems in regard to the Yamatai question. For instance, it has been argued that the name of the country the Chinese visited should be pronounced Yamaichi, not Yamatai; in that case, the name could refer neither to Yamato in the Kinai nor to Yamato in Kyushu, two major candidates for Yamatai.

In order to locate Yamatai accurately, we cannot rely solely on the information in Chinese texts and on the comparison of place names in these texts with place names known in Japan. The reason is that by doing so, scholars have come up with more than ten candidates for Yamatai in Kyushu alone. On the other hand, archaeological findings cannot yet furnish a definite answer either.[61] Even so, the *Wei chih* account provides valuable information about the lives of people in the

60 The *San-kuo chih* first appeared in print between 1000 and 1002. The oldest extant printed texts date, however, from the twelfth century: One dates between 1131 and 1162 and the other, held by the Imperial Household Agency, from 1190 to 1194.

61 Okazaki, "Nihon kōkogaku no hōhō," p. 39.

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late Yayoi period, information that can be corroborated by archaeological findings.

The visit to "Wa" took place after the Chinese, temporarily ousted from the Liao-tung and Korean peninsulas, sought to reestablish their control over these important border regions. The political complexion of the Korean peninsula had changed considerably since the Former Han established colonies there in 109 B.C. During the following 250 years, the Chinese dominated the Koreans, either controlling them directly through the Lo-lang administrative structure or indirectly through the tributary system. During the reign of the Later Han emperor Huan (A.D. 147–89), however, the Chinese grip on Lo-lang weakened, and the Samhan and Ye tribes of southern Korea freed themselves temporarily from Chinese domination. These changes were due not only to a decline in Chinese power but also to advances made by the Koreans themselves, as they moved from a stone to an iron age.

In the last years of the Later Han, the empire lost de facto control of the Liao-tung peninsula in southern Manchuria to the Kung-sun, a family of military commanders who extended their control to the Lo-lang area and set up an outpost south of Lo-lang at Tai-fang (K: Taebang), bordering the area controlled by the Samhan and Ye. The Later Han empire collapsed in 220, and China was split into three kingdoms: the Wei in the north, the Wu in the southeast, and the Shu Han in the west. During the 230s, Wei armies invaded Liao-tung, Manchuria, and northern Korea, establishing administrative structures in Liao-tung and at Lo-lang and Tai-fang. The third-century Chinese thus had the opportunity – and the motivation – to reestablish contacts with the peoples at the far eastern edge of Asia.

Though the Japanese (the Wa) did not occupy lands bordering Wei territory, they were close enough to come within the Wei's purview. Chinese relations with the Wa were established through the Tai-fang commandery and conducted under the tributary system just described. The Wa obtained valuables such as textiles and bronze mirrors from the Chinese, and the positions of Wa rulers were legitimized by the Chinese court's recognition.

The *Wei chih* section on the Wa – far more detailed than the one appearing in Former Han records – begins with an account of the visit of a Chinese delegation to some of the "countries" of Wa, which owed allegiance to a queen whose capital was located at Yamatai.[62] For some

62 Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, pp. 8–20.

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seventy or eighty years, the Wa countries had been at war with one another, but peace was finally established when the queen, an unmarried shaman named Himiko, took control of the entire region. In the year 238 she sent a delegation to Tai-fang to request an audience at court in Lo-yang, the Wei capital. The Wei emperor Ming issued the following edict in the twelfth month of that year (early in 239, by Western reckonings):

Herein we address Himiko, queen of Wa, whom we now officially call a friend of Wei. The governor of Tai-fang, Liu Hsia, has sent a messenger to accompany your vassal, Nanshōmai, and his lieutenant, Toshi Gyūri. They have arrived here with your tribute, consisting of four male slaves and six female slaves, together with two pieces of patterned cloth, each twenty feet in length. You live very far away across the sea; yet you have sent an embassy with tribute. Your loyalty and filial piety we appreciate exceedingly. We confer upon you, therefore, the title of "queen of Wa friendly to Wei," together with the decoration of the gold seal with purple ribbon. The latter, properly encased, is to be sent to you through the governor. We expect you, O Queen, to rule your people in peace and to endeavor to be devoted and obedient.

Your ambassadors, Nanshōmai and Gyūri, who have come from afar, must have had a long and fatiguing journey. We have, therefore, given to Nanshōmai an appointment as lieutenant colonel in the imperial guard, and to Gyūri an appointment as commandant in the imperial guard. We also bestow upon them the decoration of the silver seal with blue ribbon. We have granted them audience in appreciation of their visit, before sending them home with gifts. The gifts are these: five pieces of crimson brocade with dragon designs, ten pieces of crimson tapestry with dappled pattern, fifty lengths of bluish red fabric, and fifty lengths of dark blue fabric. These are in return for what you sent as tribute. As a special gift, we bestow upon you three pieces of blue brocade with interwoven characters, five pieces of tapestry with delicate floral designs, fifty lengths of white silk, eight taels of gold, two swords five feet long, one hundred bronze mirrors, and fifty catties each of jade and of red beads. All these things are sealed in boxes and entrusted to Nanshōmai and Gyūri. When they arrive and you acknowledge their receipt, you may exhibit them to your countrymen in order to demonstrate that our country thinks so much of you as to bestow such exquisite gifts upon you.[63]

Several diplomatic exchanges followed. In 240 a Wei representative, dispatched from the Tai-fang commandery, presented the queen with an imperial rescript and a seal with a ribbon, along with gifts of gold brocade, tapestry, swords, and mirrors. Three years later an eight-member Wa delegation to Wei presented the emperor with

63 *San-kuo chih* 30, p. 857; trans. Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, pp. 14–15, with minor editing changes.

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slaves, native brocade, red and blue silk, a fabric robe, cloth, cinnabar, and a wooden bow with short arrows. In 245, the Wei court awarded Nanshōmai a yellow pennant, to be presented from the Tai-fang commandery.[64]

The next report on the diplomatic relations between Wa and the Wei court concerns the Wei's mediation in a dispute between two rival Wa states. Himiko, at odds with the king of Kunu, had sent an envoy to the prefect of Tai-fang to ask for Chinese support. The government at Tai-fang issued a proclamation "advising reconciliation."[65] The proclamation was carried to Wa by Chang Cheng, an officer of the Wei border guard who apparently stayed in Wa for a number of years afterwards, possibly as a political or military adviser.[66] When Himiko died, the *Wei chih* reports, a man was appointed as her successor, but he could not keep order and was replaced by a thirteen-year-old girl, no doubt a shaman like Himiko. As representative of the Wei court, Chang Cheng recognized the girl as the ruler, and she renewed tributary relations with the court, offering gifts of slaves, pearls, jade *magatama*, and brocade.[67] The *Wei chih* account of diplomatic relations between Wa and Wei ends with this episode.

Archaeological findings and textual studies attest to the accuracy of the *Wei chih* account of diplomatic relations between Wa and Wei. According to Ōba Osamu, the imperial edict issued to Himiko by the Wei emperor Ming follows the standard form set during the Han dynasty for edicts of this type.[68] The phraseology used in Himiko's investiture appears in other sources: an edict issued by the Emperor Ming in 229, investing the ruler of the Central Asian state of Kushana, and seals granted by the Western Chin court to the rulers of the Tibetan peoples Ti and Ch'iang.[69] The title given to Nanshōmai, moreover, also appears in the inscription of a silver seal with a Western Chin dynasty date. The seal was discovered in Inner Mongolia, along with two gold seals from the same period. The Western Chin court proba-

64 *San-kuo chih* 30, p. 857; trans. Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 15.

65 *San-kuo chih* 30, pp. 857–8; trans. Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, pp. 15–16.

66 Okazaki Takashi, "Sanseiki yori nanaseiki no tairiku ni okeru kokusai kankei to Nihon: kinenmei o motsu kōkogaku gakuteki shiryō o chūshin to shite," in Kondō Yoshiro and Fujisawa Chōji, eds., *Kofun jidai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon no kōkogaku* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1966), 1.615.

67 *San-kuo chih* 30, p. 858; trans. Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 16.

68 Ōba Osamu, *Shin Gi Wa ō* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1971).

69 Enoki Kazuo, *Yamatai koku, Nihon rekishi shinsho* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1973). Just where the seals were found is unknown.

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bly had possession of the Wei emperor Ming's edict and copied its phrases directly.[70]

The silken goods mentioned in the decree are similar to those found at grave sites in the Uighur cities of Loulan and Niya (in present-day Sinkiang Province, China) and at the Astana site in Turfan.[71] Only a few silken fibers have been found at Japanese sites, but this is not surprising, as silk is very hard to preserve in a humid climate such as Japan's. On the other hand, bronze mirrors keep very well, and many mirrors – some perhaps the very ones given to Himiko – have been found at Yayoi sites. So far, five mirrors bearing Wei dynasty dates have been discovered at Japanese sites. As I will explain later, these dated mirrors may have a bearing on the location of Yamatai.

Although the location of Yamatai is still a matter of dispute, some of the places that the Chinese visited early in their journey have definitely been identified: The distances and directions cited seem to be accurate, and the place names given in the text often resemble present-day place names. The *Wei chih* account reports that the Wa occupied mountainous islands to the southeast of the Tai-fang commandery. Beginning at Tai-fang, the Chinese sailed along the west coast of the Korean peninsula, passing various Korean "countries," and then turned southeast along the coast of Kou-ya-han, more than seven thousand *li* from Tai-fang.[72] (Kou-ya-han is thought to have been the Kimhae region of southeastern Korea, an area that borders the Naktong River in South Kyŏngsang Province.) From there the Chinese crossed a three thousand-*li* stretch of ocean, passing the islands of Tsushima and Iki. Finally they arrived at Matsuro, which probably corresponds to the Matsuura District of northern Kyushu. An overland trip of five hundred *li* to the southeast brought the envoys to the country of Ito, probably the vicinity of the Yayoi period sites of Mikumo and Ihara.

According to the *Wei chih*, Ito was governed by hereditary kings subordinate to the "queen country" of Yamatai, Himiko's domain. Ito was a way station along the route between Wa and Korea:

70 Okazaki Takashi, (*Zusetsu*) *Chūgoku no rekishi 3: Gi Shin Nanbokuchō no sekai* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977); Li I-yü, "Nei Meng-ku ch'u-t'u ku-tai kuang-yin te hsin tsu-liao" (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1961), p. 9; and Li I-yü, "Nei Meng-ku ch'u t'u wen-wu kung-tso-tui," *Nei Meng-ku ch'u t'u wen-wu hsüan-chi* (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1963).

71 "Hsin-chiang Wei-wu-erh Tzu-chih ch'ü Po-wu-kuan," *Ssu-ch'ou chih lu*, trans. in Okazaki Takashi, *Kan Tō no senshoku – shiruku rōdo no shinshutsudohin* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1973).

72 In 1975, accompanied by Professors Inoue Mitsusada, Hirano Kunio, Otomasa Shigetaka, and Kadokawa Harutoshi, I crossed the Tsushima Strait from Pusan to northern Kyushu in a wooden boat of the type that the third-century Chinese envoys to Japan might have used.

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When the ruler sends envoys to visit the Chinese capital, or when the Tai-fang prefecture or the various Han [Korean] countries or prefects send envoys to the Wa country, they are all made to stop at the port for inspection, so that messages and gifts to the queen may reach her without mishap.[73]

Two officials responsible to Himiko were stationed at Ito: a governor and an inspector whose responsibility was to watch over the provinces north of Yamatai and to keep them properly respectful of the queen. The governor was probably someone skilled in dealing with Chinese visitors – perhaps it was even Nanshōmai or one of the men who had accompanied him on embassies to Lo-yang or Tai-fang.

One hundred *li* to the southeast of Ito lay the country of Na. Archaeological research and a comparison of ancient and modern place names indicate that Na can be identified with an area of the present Fukuoka City. The Chinese had made contact with the people of Na some two hundred years earlier: It was the king of Na who had been given a gold seal in A.D. 57 by the Later Han emperor, a seal thought to be the one discovered at Shikanoshima in Fukuoka. Traces of the name Na appear in the ancient place name Nanotsu and in the name of the Naka River that flows through the Fukuoka flatlands. From Na the Wei envoys journeyed one hundred *li* to the east until they reached the country of Fumi. From this point in the journey, it is difficult to identify the place names mentioned. The envoys took twenty days, according to the account, to cross the ocean from Fumi to Toma, the next destination, and the journey between Toma and Yamatai took ten days by sea and another month overland.

Some of the *Wei chih*'s information on Wa daily life can be corroborated by archaeological findings. According to the account, Wa crops included rice, hemp, and mulberry trees. We know that rice was grown in Japan from the end of the Jōmon period, and scraps of hemp cloth have been found at a middle Yayoi period site in Fukuoka Prefecture.[74] Mulberry trees were grown to provide food for silkworms, and it seems that the Wa were technically advanced enough to weave some of their own silks, as native brocade was listed among the gifts to Wei in 243.[75] The weapons cited in the Chinese account include spears, shields, and short wooden bows that used arrows tipped with bone and iron, implements that have been found at Yayoi sites. Stone arrow-

73 Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, pp. 12–13.

74 Wajinden no michi kenkyūkai and Minamoto Kōdō, *Maboroshi no joō Himiko: Yamatai koku e no michi: kodai Nihon no nazo to roman* (Fukuoka: Asahi shimbun seibu honsha kikakubu, 1980), p. 101.

75 Okazaki, "Sanseiki yori nanaseiki no tairiku ni okeru kokusai kankei to Nihon," p. 616.

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heads were not mentioned by the Chinese, and in fact, stone weapons had just about been replaced by iron ones by late Yayoi times.

Decisions regarding journeys and other important matters were made through divination by scapulimancy, using the shoulderblades of deer. Similar methods, using tortoise shells as well as animal bones, were practiced elsewhere in northeast Asia, especially in Shang dynasty China. In these practices a question would first be posed, and then holes would be drilled in the bone or shell, which would then be heated. The answer was revealed by the shape and direction of the fissures that appeared. Archaeological sites have yielded evidence that scapulimancy, using the bones of deer and wild boar, was practiced in Japan during the Yayoi period. More than sixty bones with artificial holes and fissures have been discovered at sites on Iki Island, and evidence of tortoise shell divination has been found on Tsushima.[76] Tortoise shell divination is still practiced on Tsushima today, and oracle bones are used in shrines in the Kantō region.

The Yamatai queen Himiko was a shaman thought to possess spiritual powers. Though an adult, she remained unmarried and was assisted in ruling the country by her younger brother, who dealt with secular affairs. A thousand women attended her, but only one man, who served her food and acted as her medium of communication with her people. The Himiko described in this account resembles the shamans of northeast China and Korea, in other words, she was a medium whose function it was to communicate with the kami.[77] The *Wei chih* also reports that Himiko's palace was surrounded by lookout towers and stockades and that she was constantly guarded by armed men. When she died, a mound 145 meters in diameter was made for her tomb, and more than one hundred slaves were buried with her.

Among Himiko's gifts, some items were designated as "special" and had perhaps even been requested by the Wa. One hundred bronze mirrors were included on this list. Mirrors were prized, as we have seen, before Himiko's time and were frequently used as grave goods, an indication of their ritual value. Because Himiko was a shaman, it is not surprising that she and her people especially valued the mirrors received from the Wei court. She probably collected mirrors as symbols of power and used them in shamanistic rites. Some scholars have

76 Wajinden no michi kenkyūkai and Minamoto, *Yamatai koku e no michi*, p. 100; Kimura Kitarō, "Nagasaki-ken Ikishima shutsudo no bokkotsu," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 64 (March 1979): pp. 9, 17–18; Kanzawa Yūichirō, "Yayoi jidai kofun jidai oyobi Nara jidai no bokkotsu bokkōn," *Shundai shigaku* 38 (1976).

77 Kanzawa, "Yayoi jidai kofun jidai oyobi Nara jidai no bokkotsu bokkōn."

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suggested that mirrors were used in rituals related to sun worship, a theory born out by references (cited earlier in this chapter) to mirrors in connection with the Sun Goddess Amaterasu.

Five mirrors bearing Wei dynasty dates have been found in Japan: two mirrors dated 239, one at the Koganezuka tomb (Izumi, Ōsaka Prefecture), and one at the Kamihara Shrine (Kamo, Shimane Prefecture); and three examples dated 240, at the Shibazaki Kanizawa tomb (Takasaki, Gumma Prefecture), at the Morio tomb (Toyooka, Hyōgo Prefecture), and at Nanyō City, Yamaguchi Prefecture.[78] The mirrors are between twenty-two and twenty-three centimeters in diameter. All are decorated with images of deities and animals, and all but one have borders of a sawtooth design;[79] the exception is the Koganezuka mirror, which has a plain border. The mirrors – and others like them discovered elsewhere – were unearthed from *tateana* tombs (with entrances tunneled vertically into the earth's surface) dating from the early Burial Mound period.[80]

The years inscribed on the mirrors were the years in which the Wa delegation arrived in the Wei capital of Lo-yang, were promised gifts by the emperor, and returned home to present them to the queen. Thus it is possible that these mirrors were among those given to Himiko. Moreover, because the mirrors are similar in design to many mirrors found in the Kinai region,[81] theories placing Himiko's capital in the Kinai would seem to stand on firm ground.[82] However, scholars disagree on where the mirrors of this design were actually cast, even though the inscriptions on the mirrors themselves suggest that they were of Chinese manufacture. These inscriptions list the artisans as bronzecasters surnamed Ch'en, a name that is clearly Chinese. Moreover, some of the mirrors have inscriptions that state, "The copper [for this mirror] was mined in Hsü-chou and the artist lives in Lo-yang." As I shall demonstrate, however, information provided by these inscriptions may be misleading.

78 Suenaga Masao, Shimada Satoru, and Mori Kōichi, "Izumi Koganezuka kofun," in Nihon kōkogaku kyōkai, ed., *Nihon kōkogaku hōkoku* (Kyoto: Sōgeisha, 1954), vol. 5; Hasuoka Noriaki, "Shimane-ken Kamo-chō Kamihara jinja kofun shutsudo no Keisho sannen Ch'en Shih saku jūretsu shiki shinjūkyō," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 58 (December 1972): 89; Gotō Shuichi, *Kokyō shūei*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Ōtsuka kōgeisha, 1935–42); Umehara Sueji, "Izushi-gun Kami-mura kofun," in Hyōgo-kenchō, ed., *Hyōgo-ken shiseki meisho tennen kinenbutsu chōsa hōkoku* 2 (Hyōgo-ken: Hyōgo-kenchō, 1926); Tanaka Migaku, *Nihon genshi bijutsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979).

79 Tomioka Kenzō, *Kokyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Tomioka Masutarō, 1920).

80 Umehara Sueji, "Jōdai kofun shutsudo no kokyō ni tsuite," in Kōkogakkai, ed., *Kagami tsurugi oyobi tama no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1940).

81 Kobayashi Yukio, *Kofun jidai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1961).

82 Takahashi Kenji, "Kōkogakujō yori mitaru Yamatai koku," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 12 (1922), pp. 20–43.

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As early as 1920, Tomioka Kenzō pointed out that no mirrors with sawtooth borders and deity-animal designs had been discovered at Wei dynasty sites.[83] This suggests that the mirrors did not come from Wei. Despite their inscriptions, they may have been made in Japan sometime after the mid-third century and thus cannot be used to help us locate Yamatai.

One of the strongest arguments for this view comes from the Chinese archaeologist Wang Zhong-shu, assistant director of the Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, who uses archaeological findings in China to investigate the problem.[84] Professor Wang pointed out major differences between "Wei" mirrors found at Japanese sites and third-century mirrors discovered in China. Many mirrors have been found at Ying-ch'eng in Hupei Province, the site of the ancient capital of Wu, which controlled central and southeast China at the same time that Wei was dominant in the north. A number of these mirrors bear inscriptions marking them as products of the Later Han, Wei, and Wu dynasties. Though many are decorated with designs of deities and animals, they have plain borders, not the sawtooth borders found on all but one of the Japanese examples. Moreover, the Japanese mirrors are larger than most of the third-century mirrors found at Chinese sites.

Many archaeological investigations of other Chinese sites that contain third-century artifacts have been conducted during the last several decades. No prototypes of the Japanese examples have been found in the extensive tomb excavations made at Lo-yang, the Later Han capital. Though findings in Chekiang Province (in a region of the lower Yangtze River basin developed in the Later Han) include some mirrors with deity-animal designs, as well as examples with images of other types, most are made of iron, not bronze. Finally, most of the Wei dynasty mirrors found so far do not have the deity-animal design. Instead, common Wei designs include the concatenated arc, the central square, and images of dragons, and the mirrors are sometimes marked with inscriptions expressing the wish for promotion to high office.

The argument that the Japanese "Wei" mirrors were indeed of Chinese manufacture rests in part on the inscription identifying as Chinese both the artist and the source of the material. Mirrors found in China, however, do not generally have such inscriptions; in only one

83 Tomioka, *Kokyō no kenkyū*.

84 Wang Zhong-shu, "Notes on the Triangular-rimmed Bronze Mirrors with Mythical Animal Designs Found in Japan," *Kaogu* (*Archaeology*) 4 (1981): 346–58.

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case is there a similar inscription regarding the copper, on a mirror excavated from the San Tao mound in Liao-yang, Liao-tung Province. Thus Professor Wang argues that the inscription on the Japanese mirrors is misleading. He believes that the mirrors were cast in Japan, not China, and that the artist was an immigrant from Wu, where mirrors of a similar but not identical type have been found. If this is indeed the case, then the "Wei" mirrors found in Kinai region tombs could not possibly be the ones given to Himiko in the third century. That is, one of the strongest arguments for locating Yamatai in the Kinai region could very well be invalid.

In attempting to determine the location of Yamatai, scholars have relied not only on archaeological findings such as mirrors but also on the calculations of distances and directions over water and land recorded in the *Wei chih*. If the text is accepted literally, it appears that the Wei envoys proceeded from the Korean peninsula in either a southern or a southeastern direction to arrive at the countries of Wa. In the Wei period, moreover, the Chinese believed that the Wa lived directly to the east of present-day Fukien. Such indications led Japanese scholars such as Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) to argue that Yamatai was in Kyushu.[85] In contrast with the theory that sets Yamatai in the Yamato area of the Kinai, the Kyushu theory has many different candidates for the exact location of Himiko's country.[86] Because the information given in the *Wei chih* is incomplete and sometimes inconsistent with geographical facts, however, scholars been unable to agree on the location of Yamatai.

Certain details of the *Wei chih* suggest that the Chinese never actually reached Yamatai but merely reported what they had been told by the Japanese. For the initial portion of the journey, distances over land and water are given in *li*, a Chinese linear measure. But these calculations halt abruptly when the Chinese reach Fumi; after that, distance is measured in travel time. A seventh-century Chinese dynastic history, the *Sui shu*, complains of the Wa: "These barbarians do not know how to measure distance by *li* and measure it by days."[87] This suggests that in the *Wei chih*, distances in travel time were based on hearsay evidence from the Japanese rather than on calculations made by Chi-

85 Motoori Norinaga, *Gyojū gaigen*, in *Dai Nihon bunka*, vol. 8 of *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1972). The Kyushu theory was later elaborated by Shiratori Kurakichi in "Yamatai koku ni tsuite," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 12 (1922): 8–15.

86 Minamoto Kōdo, "Ranritsu suru 'Yamatai koku'," in Wajinden no michi kenkyūkai and Minamoto, *Yamatai koku e no michi*, pp. 176–7.

87 Wei Cheng et al., *Sui shu* (Peking, Ku-chi Ch'u-pan she, 1973), vol. 81, p. 1825; trans. Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 28.

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nese who had actually taken the journey. There is also an abrupt break in the quality of the descriptive passages after the Chinese leave Ito. Tsushima, Iki, Matsuro, and Ito are accurately and often pictorially described, as anyone who has traveled in the area can attest.[88] After that, however, the vividness fades and the same details – the listing of population figures and the titles of officials – are repeated for each place. This also suggests that the Chinese proceeded no farther than Ito.

In short, we are still far from determining the actual location of Yamatai. Professor Wang's studies cast doubt on a major argument for locating Himiko's country in the Kinai, and ambiguities and inconsistencies in the *Wei chih* itself make it difficult to rely on the text's geographical information.

Yet the *Wei chih* account of the third-century Wa contains valuable information on Yayoi society. The Wa people were farmers and fishermen who had already begun to form a stratified society. The Chinese visitors seem to have been impressed by the orderliness and peacefulness of the Wa: The women were neither quarrelsome nor jealous, even though the men had several wives; there were no thefts; litigation was rare; taxes and labor services were collected easily; and granaries and markets were established in each province.

Dress, manners, and social customs are described in detail. The men wore loosely fastened clothing made of wide pieces of cloth and wrapped strips of bark around their heads, perhaps in the fashion of today's headband (*hachimaki*). Women dressed their hair in loops and wore unlined robes lipped over their heads. People painted their bodies with cinnabar and red earth. Men and boys tattooed their faces and bodies, a practice originally intended to frighten away large fish and waterfowl that annoyed them when they were diving for food. The *Wei chih* account also notes that people were buried in single coffins covered with mounds of earth. During a mourning period of ten days, the survivors abstained from meat, and the head mourners wept and lamented. Others gathered to sing, dance, and drink wine, and the family of the deceased purified themselves by washing in water, much as later Japanese have performed ablutions at Shinto shrines. When the Wa people set out across the sea to China, one person was chosen as a professional abstainer. He was not permitted to comb his hair, delouse himself, or wash his clothes, nor could he eat meat or have sexual contact. If the sea voyage was successful, this "fortune keeper"

88 My conclusions are based partly on firsthand observations.

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was given slaves and goods, but if the voyage met with disaster, he was killed in the belief that he had violated a taboo.

The *Wei chih* account also contains important data on relations between the Chinese court and the Japanese communities that eventually were consolidated into the Yamato state. Like other leaders of tribes and communities throughout East Asia, Himiko and her successor were anxious to maintain tributary relations with China, the source of the continent's dominant culture. Such relations provided the Wa with valuables that could be distributed to supporters and used as symbols of power. China's recognition of Himiko's authority must have enhanced her position among her own people and strengthened her claim to hegemony over neighboring territory. Japan's relations with the Chinese court were thus of great importance in the slow process of political consolidation and cultural development in the late Yayoi and early Burial Mound periods.

JAPAN AND THE THREE KOREAN KINGDOMS

When Himiko died in the middle of the third century, Japan was made up of petty states, some joined in a federation that gave allegiance to a single shamanistic ruler. By the sixth century, a central government had been established in the Yamato basin in central Honshu. Though control of distant provinces was far from complete, the Yamato court's authority was acknowledged from Kyushu to eastern Japan; and in battles with tribal peoples, Yamato forces were steadily pushing the frontier northward. Contacts with the Asian continent during these three centuries – generally known as the Burial Mound period – played a crucial role in the establishment of Yamato authority and the formation of the Japanese state.

The Chinese empire, which had once dominated much of East Asia, had disintegrated, and the land was now beset by civil war. In the middle of the third century, China's Three Kingdoms (the Shu Han, the Wei, and the Wu) were reunified under the Western Chin (265–316). This short-lived dynasty fell in 316 in the face of invasion from peoples living beyond the northern frontier. Its successor, the Eastern Chin (317–420), retreated to the Yangtze valley and maintained control over southern China until the beginning of the fifth century. Meanwhile, the north was fragmented by various nomadic invaders. China was divided between north and south for more than 250 years. Successive dynasties, some of them lasting for only a few decades, ruled in both regions.

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In the fourth century, the people of Korea took important steps toward political consolidation, forming three major kingdoms and a separate league of smaller states. At the beginning of the century, northern Korea was still dominated by the Chinese commanderies,[89] but in 313, when the Western Chin was about to collapse, the rising northern Korean state of Koguryŏ conquered Tai-fang and Lo-lang. The Chinese who had lived in these commanderies were stranded in Korea, and many intermarried with Koreans. For a time, the old commanderies were not completely absorbed by the Koguryŏ state but remained as repositories of Chinese culture. In southern Korea emerged two kingdoms, Silla and Paekche. The small states in the region dominated by the Samhan tribes formed the Kaya federation, which maintained close relations with the Japanese.

Koguryŏ: Korea's first sinified kingdom

The oldest of Korea's three kingdoms, Koguryŏ, drew its strength from two sources: its adoption of Chinese culture and methods of governance and its embrace of techniques of mounted combat from northeast Asian warriors. The Koguryŏ state was based on a military alliance formed in the third century by tribes in the Yalu River basin. Koguryŏ armies rapidly gained strength and extended their area of control. The account of the Chin dynasty in the Chinese history *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* records Koguryŏ's encounters with the Former Yen (the regime established by the Hsien-pei people that controlled the Liao-tung peninsula), the Wei, the Samhan states of southern Korea, and the Western Chin itself.[90] In 313, during the reign of King Mi-ch'ŏn, Koguryŏ forces invaded the Lo-lang and Tai-fang commanderies. Though Koguryŏ was at first victorious, conflicts with Yen and Paekche resulted in military disaster in the mid-fourth century. According to the *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien,* Yen armies attacked the Koguryŏ capital of Hwando-sŏng in 342 and burned the palace to the ground, violated Mi-ch'ŏn's grave, and captured the king's mother, the queen, and fifty thousand others. The Koguryŏ king himself was killed in 371 during an invasion by Paekche.

Koguryŏ's losses indicated its need to reorganize both its army and its political structure. Under King Sosurim (r. 371–84), Koguryŏ

89 Komai, *Rakurō gunchi shi.*
90 Ssu-ma Kuang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (Peking: Ku-chi Ch'upanshe, 1957).

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adopted Chinese-style governmental forms and other elements of Chinese culture, including Buddhism.[91] A university was established; Chinese-style laws were promulgated; and by 393 nine Buddhist monasteries had been built in the P'yŏngyang area. The warrior king Kwanggaet'o (r. 391–413) expanded Koguryŏ's territory to the north and east, taking portions of Manchuria and the Liao-tung peninsula, and drove back an alliance of Paekche and Japanese troops that threatened Koguryŏ's southern border.

Kwanggaet'o's successor Changsu (r. 413–91) tightened his grip on the former Chinese commanderies, in part by opening diplomatic relations with the Eastern Chin. In 413, Changsu sent an emissary to the Eastern Chin court, which formally designated him as the "ruler of Lo-lang." The recognition by the Eastern Chin of Koguryŏ's sovereignty over Lo-lang forced the Chinese living there to submit to Koguryŏ rule. In 427 Changsu further tightened his control of the area by moving his capital from the Yalu River basin to the old Lo-lang seat of government (present-day P'yŏngyang).

Later in his long reign, Changsu established relations with both the northern and southern Chinese courts. These ties facilitated the consolidation of the Koguryŏ state and the expansion of Koguryŏ power. In 475 Koguryŏ forces took the Paekche capital of Hansŏng (located in the present Kwangju area, Kyŏnggi Province) and killed the Paekche king. By then Changsu's Koguryŏ had become a great kingdom, encompassing the old strongholds of Chinese culture in Liao-tung, Lo-lang, and Tai-fang and stretching southward to the valley of the Han River.

The sinification of Korea was hastened by lingering Chinese influence in the former commanderies at Tai-fang and Lo-lang. For example, Koguryŏ adopted the Chinese practice of using era names (auspicious names assigned to periods within a monarch's reign), although it eventually adopted its own era names. Roof tiles inscribed with the characters for "Great Chin Yüan-hsing" (403–5, in the reign of the Emperor An-ti of Eastern Chin) have been found at the remains of an earth-walled village in southern P'yŏngyang, where the headquarters of Lo-lang is thought to have been located.[92] Even after the commandery came under Koguryŏ's control, it retained a certain autonomy: Roof tiles found at Lo-lang and Tai-fang indicate that the people

91 Kim Pu-sik, *Samguk sagi*, 2 vols., bk. 15 of Sin Ho-yŏl, ed., *Samguk sagi* (Great books) (Seoul: Tongso Munhwasa, 1978), vol. 1, p. 405.

92 Komai, *Rakurō gunchi shi*.

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there used Chinese era names until 427, when the Koguryŏ king Changsu moved his capital to the P'yŏngyang area.[93]

The Anak tomb and its wall paintings

The Chinese of the Liao-tung peninsula also brought high culture and technology to Koguryŏ, especially in the fourth century, when many Chinese fled to northern Korea to escape the invading Hsien-pei. The tomb of one such refugee, apparently a man of wealth and distinction, has been discovered at Anak village in North Hwanghae Province. The tomb's chambers and murals resemble those of Wei and Chin period tombs in Liao-yang on the Liao-tung peninsula.[94]

The Anak tomb, a stone chamber discovered in 1949, is particularly valuable for its wall paintings and for the burial records inscribed in ink on one of the chamber's walls. Results of initial investigations conducted by archaeologists and ethnographers from North Korea's Institute of Archaeology were published in 1951. According to the Chinese scholar Yeh Pai, who deciphered the inscription published in that report, the tomb is that of a man named Tung Shou, who died in 357. Yeh argued that this was the same Tung Shou who appears in two Chinese histories, *Chin shu* and *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*, a refugee from Liao-tung who fled Hsien-pei invaders in 337.[95] Though some Korean scholars maintained that the tomb was that of King Mi-ch'ŏn, the formal Korean report issued in 1958 accepted Yeh's conclusions.[96]

Layers of horizontal flat stones provide the ceiling for the tomb, which is entered through a small rectangular hallway that opens onto a larger anteroom. Off the anteroom are two smaller rooms, one to the east and one to the west; a square inner chamber, bordered by a narrow corridor on its north and east, is situated at the back of the tomb. The rooms are modeled after those in the interior of a house. Although the tomb has been looted of most of its valuables, four black-lacquered coffins remain, three in the inner chamber and one in the anteroom.

The wall paintings in the tomb provide valuable information about the clothing, weapons, and daily activities of both warriors and villag-

93 Umehara Sueji, "Chōsen hokubu shutsudo kinen sen shūroku," *Shinagaku* 7 (1933–35), pp. 121–28.

94 Fujita Kunio, "Ryōyō hakken no san hekiga kofun," *Myūjiamu* 59 (1956): 13–16.

95 Fang Hsüan-ling, ed., *Chin shu* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1974), vol. 109, pp. 2815–16.

96 Lhee Chin Hye, "Kaihōgo Chōsen kōkogaku no hatten (zoku), Kokuri hekimen kofun no kenkyū," *Kōkogaku zasshi* 45 (1959), pp. 203–224. Fujita, "Ryōyō hakken no san hekiga kofun"; and Okazaki Takashi, "Angaku daisan-gō fun no kenkyū," *Shien* 93 (1964): 90–3.

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ers. The fresco on the upper south wall of the anteroom depicts a procession of seven soldiers and is inscribed with the characters *chan li* (warrior) written in red. The four men on the right are dressed in long robes and carry banners, and the three on the left wear short knee-length trousers. On the left side of the east wall is a fresco of a wrestling scene that features two bearded men dressed only in loincloths, like the Japanese sumo wrestlers of today. Figures of several men are painted on the side walls of the west entrance. The buckles of the belts on the men's trousers are decorated with gold ornaments with pendants in a pattern of flowering branches. The two figures on the walls of the west room appear to be portraits of Tung Shou and his wife, who was buried with him. Tung Shou, a bearded gentleman wearing a round black hat and a long red coat, is shown seated beneath a canopy. The other portrait depicts a stout woman seated on a raised platform, shaded by a canopy, and attended by serving women. The east room's frescoes portray a carriage in a coach house, trays laden with food, and oxen and horses eating. A village scene shows a well with a bucket suspended on a pole above it; beside the well, a woman washes rice to remove dirt and bran. The ceiling of the anteroom is decorated with a pattern of birds and bullfrogs, animals that represent the sun and the moon in Chinese yin–yang symbolism. The centers of the ceilings in both the inner and the west chambers are decorated with a lotus-petal pattern, Korea's oldest example of a common Buddhist symbol.

From a historian's point of view, one of the most interesting frescoes is the ten-meter-long painting on the east wall of the north corridor. This depicts a procession of warriors with the weapons, armor, and horse trappings used in Koguryŏ mounted warfare. Fifty-seven riders and 250 attendants on foot accompany the central figure, a man seated in an ox-drawn carriage. The procession is led by a band of men blowing flutes and striking drums and gongs. Foot soldiers, dressed in armor made of small iron platelets held together with thongs and braid, carry shields, spears, and long swords with attached rings. Other attendants carry banners, flags, bows, and quivers full of arrows. On the edges of the procession are mounted warriors dressed in armor like that of the foot soldiers and bearing long spears. Horses are also armored and decorated with bells. Additional riders, carrying parasols, follow the figure in the carriage.

The Anak findings suggest the importance of both China and the northeast Asian warrior peoples to the development of Koguryŏ. When the frescoes at Anak are compared with archaeological findings elsewhere, it is clear that weapons and military gear were introduced to

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Korea by the Hsien-pei of Liao-tung, with whom Koguryŏ had fought. Though the clothing of the fresco's central figure is Chinese, the foot soldiers and cavalrymen are dressed in a manner common among both the Hsien-pei and northern Korean mounted warriors of the fourth century. Other Koguryŏ tombs resemble Anak in their construction style and their murals depicting military scenes. It thus seems likely that burial practices were transmitted from China to Korea, perhaps by refugees such as Tung Shou and by the residents of the former Chinese commanderies at Lo-lang and Tai-fang, who found themselves stranded in Koguryŏ during the turmoil of the fourth century.

Evidence from burial mound sites indicates the extent to which Koguryŏ's tomb contruction methods, burial practices, and equestrian culture – transmitted from both China and northeast Asia – was passed on in turn to Japan. Like the Koreans of Koguryŏ and Paekche, the Japanese dug their tombs by tunneling horizontally into the flank of a hill, a technique adopted from China. The large keyhole-shaped tombs of Burial Mound Japan are variations of this style. The grave goods in Japanese mounds such as the keyhole-shaped Ōtani tomb in Wakayama City, constructed in the mid-fifth century, include military equipment and equestrian trappings, some made in Koguryŏ styles.[97] The mound, thought to be that of the Ki clan of regional hegemons, contains a box-shaped coffin made from stone slabs and covered with a lid resembling a roof. Items like those found in Koguryŏ tombs include armor for mounts, iron horse masks, saddles, harnesses, and harness ornaments such as bells and bronze ornaments made in openwork or low-relief design. Such items were probably imported from Koguryŏ or made in Japan by immigrant craftsmen.[98]

The "general's tomb" and King Kwanggaet'o's stele

Archaeological remains from the fourth and fifth centuries attest to the power of Koguryŏ in its expansionist phase. Moving north and east, King Kwanggaet'o attacked the Sushen in southeast Siberia, the Puyŏ in Manchuria, and the Yen on the Liao-tung peninsula. His exploits are commemorated by a sketch on the wall of a tomb in South P'yŏngan Province that resembles the Anak tomb. The sketch is that

97 Higuchi Takayasu and Kyōto daigaku kōkogaku kenkyūshitsu, *Ōtani kofun: Wakayama-shi Ōtani* (Wakayama: Wakayama-shi kyōiku iinkai, 1959).

98 Egami Namio, *Nihon bijutsu no tanjō*, trans. John Bester, *The Beginnings of Japanese Art* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1973), p. 148; Amasaku Ken, "Aspects of Yayoi and Tumulus Art," *The Beginnings of Japanese Art*, p. 174.

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of a castle labeled in ink as the "Liao-tung fortress," one of the king's important conquests. Kwanggaet'o's fame extended southward as well: A copper bowl with an inscription dated 415 honoring him as a "great and good ruler" has been found in a Silla tomb.[99]

A tomb thought to be that of Kwanggaet'o himself is located in the old Koguryŏ capital of Kungnae-sŏng on the northern bank of the Yalu River in present-day Manchuria. The "general's tomb," as it is called, is constructed of masonry and measures over thirty meters high and ten meters square.[100] The opening of the chamber, like that of the Anak tomb and others in Paekche and Japan, is tunneled horizontally into the flank of the mound. The impressive size of the tomb, larger than those commonly found in China, indicates the power and wealth of Koguryŏ and its king.

King Kwanggaet'o's commemorative stele was erected by his son Changsu in 414, the year after Kwanggaet'o's death. Made from a boulder about 8.5 meters high, the stele is inscribed on all four sides with records of Kwanggaet'o's exploits, including the conquest of sixty-four walled cities and fourteen hundred villages and the defeat of the Wa in 399 on behalf of Koguryŏ's ally Silla.[101] The dates found on the stele (from 395 to 410) are Chinese-style era names that correspond to those recorded in the *Samguk sagi*, a twelfth-century compilation of ancient Korean records and legends. From this we can conclude that by the fourth century, Koguryŏ had adopted era names of the same type used at the Chinese commanderies of Tai-fang and Lo-lang.

The rise of Paekche

The Korean kingdom of Paekche was formed from the tribes of Mahan, an ancient south Korean state referred to in the *Wei chih*. The man known later as Paekche's first king, Kŭn Ch'ogo, unified the fifty-odd Mahan tribes and, in 371, personally led a large army that attacked the Koguryŏ stronghold at present-day P'yŏngyang, killing the Koguryŏ king. Paekche then temporarily held the Lo-lang and Tai-fang areas. In 372, Paekche established relations with the Chinese court of Eastern Chin, which recognized Kŭn Ch'ogo as "the general who has subdued

99 Kim Che-wŏn, *Kyŏngju Nosŏ-ri Houch'ong kwa Ŭnnyŏngch'ong*, vol. 1 of (*Tae Han'guk*) *Kungnip Pangmulgwan kojŏk chosa pogo* (Seoul: Ŭlyumunhwasa, 1948).

100 Ikeuchi Hiroshi and Umehara Sueji, *Tsūkō*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Shinkyō Nichī-Man bunka kyōkai, 1938–40).

101 Yi Chin-hŭi, *Kōkaido-ō ryōhi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972); Saeki Yūsei, "Kokuri Kōkaido do-ō ryōhibun sai kentō no tame no joshō," *Nihon rekishi* 287 (April 1972): 2–4.

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the east, and governor of Lo-lang and Tai-fang." Koguryŏ's setback was only temporary, however, and Paekche was eventually pushed southward to the present Kongju–Puyŏ region in southwest Korea.

Like Himiko of Wa, the Paekche kings sought China's recognition of their rulership and their regional hegemony. In the late fifth and sixth centuries, Paekche established relations with the successive southern Chinese dynasties, including the Sung, Southern Ch'i, and Liang: In 521, according to the Chinese history *Liang shu,* an edict issued by the Liang emperor Wu-ti conferred on the Paekche king Muryŏng (r. 502–23) the title of "pacifier of the east."[102] Some nineteen years later, the Liang court again acknowledged Muryŏng's authority as king of Paekche and his position as "pacifier of the east." Close relations with Liang were continued by Muryŏng's son King Sŏng (r. 523–53), who received similar recognition.

The tomb of the Paekche king Muryŏng

Paekche royal tombs have been discovered at the kingdom's last two capitals, Ungjin (modern Kongju) and Sabi (modern Puyŏ). In July 1971, one of the tombs at Kongju was definitely identified as that of King Muryŏng, a ruler described in the *Samguk sagi* as a heroic, humane, and righteous man with handsome features and a charismatic personality.[103] The tomb, along with several others, is located in a hilly region on the outskirts of Kongju. Muryŏng's tomb and one other have been carefully investigated and are open to the public. Both tombs are made of tile-covered walls and are entered through horizontal corridors. The smaller of the two was decorated with murals depicting the legendary Chinese deities of the four quarters (a dragon, a tiger, a phoenix, and a tortoise entwined by a serpent). The tiles are incised with patterns resembling Chinese coins.

The larger tomb, entered by an arched doorway, measures nineteen by twenty-one meters. The tiled chamber walls are decorated with patterns of lotus petals, Chinese coins, and latticework. Two stone slabs carved with burial records were originally placed at the opening of the entrance hallway, and iron coins of a type circulated in China between the Early Han and T'ang were placed on top of the slabs. Grave goods included a blue porcelain jar with four handles, of a kind made in the ancient Chinese province of Yüeh (now Chekiang Province), as well as

102 Okazaki, "Sanseiki yori nanaseiki no tairiku ni okeru kokusai kankei to Nihon," p. 635.
103 Tae Han Minguk Munhwajae Kwalliguk, *Muryŏng Wangnŭng,* trans. Nagashima Kimichika, *Bunei ōryō* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1974); Kim Pu-sik, *Samguk sagi,* p. 504.

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stone lions, a bronze *tou* (a long-stemmed, lidded Chinese-style food container), two bronze mirrors, and pottery. The wooden coffins of the king and queen were placed on a low platform in the burial chamber. According to the burial records, the tomb was constructed in 525 for Muryŏng, who had died two years before. The queen, whose death came in 526, was later entombed with her husband.

The king's coffin contained a pair of shoes, a bronze sword, and a gilt bronze crown hung with small ornaments and decorated with patterns of flowers in vases. The queen's coffin, decorated with a scenic woodcarving, held a gold crown and a hair ornament (both decorated with a lotus pattern), filigreed comma-shaped jewels, gold earrings hung with ornaments in the flowering branches pattern, a silver bracelet, and a pair of shoes. The inscription engraved on the bracelet gives the artisan's name and the zodiacal designation for the date when it was made, and it indicates that that bracelet was made especially for the queen. An alcove on one wall of Muryŏng's burial chamber contained a small blue porcelain candleholder with the remains of a burned-out wick. The candleholder, like the four-handled jar mentioned earlier, was made in China's Yüeh Province, famous for its production of porcelains.

Archaeological investigations of the Kongju tombs substantiate the Chinese accounts of Muryŏng's relations with the Liang court. For example, the Liang imperial edict of 521 referring to Muryŏng as "pacifier of the east" is echoed in the burial records preserved in his tomb. The tiles of the king's burial chamber resemble those of a Liang tomb discovered in 1960 in the Nanking region where the capital was located. An inscription on the wall of the smaller Kongju tomb indicates that the tiles on its chamber walls were made under the auspices of the Liang court for the use of an important official.[104]

Students of Japanese history know Paekche best as the kingdom that transmitted Buddhism and other elements of Chinese culture to Japan. Buddhism had come to Paekche itself late in the fourth century, introduced, according to traditional accounts, by the Indian monk Marananda, who immigrated from China in 384. Subsequent contact between Paekche and the Chinese courts resulted in a heavy flow of Buddhist scriptures and art, as well as Chinese artisans and scholars, to the Korean kingdom. Close relations with Liang were established at a time when Buddhism flourished in southern China, and many Bud-

104 Kim Ki-ung, *Kudara no kofun* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1976); Kim Ki-ung, *Shiragi no kofun* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1976).

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dhist temples were constructed in the Liang capital. Enthusiastically adopted by the ruling classes of Paekche, Buddhism was soon passed on to the Japanese. According to traditional accounts, this occurred during the reign of King Sŏng, Muryŏng's son and successor. Clothing and ornaments from Muryŏng's tomb, similar to those found in tombs in both China and Japan, indicate that Paekche was a major link between these two cultures during Japan's Burial Mound period. The debt that Japan owed to Paekche continued through the sixth century, when many art treasures were imported to grace the Buddhist temples of the capital region of Asuka.

The rise of Silla and the spread of Silla culture

At the end of the fourth century, a third Korean kingdom, later to be called Silla, emerged in the region of southeast Korea dominated by the Saro tribe. The new state, based in the old Chinhan region (present-day Kyŏngju) allied itself with Koguryŏ, no doubt to counter the influence of the Japanese, allies of Paekche and the Kaya states. In the fifth and sixth centuries, as the three Korean kingdoms contended for territory and for control of the peninsula, Silla extended its borders to the north and west, annexing one of the Kaya states.

Shortly after Silla came into being, its rulers opened relations with the Eastern Chin court in southern China. Silla was the last of the three Korean kingdoms consciously to adopt Chinese culture, but when sinification came, it was rapid and thorough. Steles erected in the sixth century commemorating the conquests of Silla's kings used Chinese-style era names when recording dates.[105] Tribal names were abandoned, and even the state's name Silla was taken from a Chinese proverb. King Pŏphŭng (r. 514–40), the first of the Silla kings to sponsor sinification, assumed the Chinese title of *wang* (king). The Chinese writing system was adopted, and Silla soldiers developed a method of using Chinese characters to represent Korean sounds. Buddhism, unofficially introduced in the fifth century, was recognized by the court during Pŏphŭng's reign, and Silla monks sent to China for study returned with additional knowledge of Chinese culture.

Archaeological findings at Kyŏngju, site of Silla's capital, reveal the nature and extent of Chinese cultural influence. Temple pagodas and worship halls were patterned after Chinese models. Important temples

105 Dates and locations of these steles are (1) 555, northern Seoul; (2) 561, South Kyŏngsang Province; (3) 568, two locations in North Hamgyŏng Province.

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established in the early years of the Silla kingdom include Bunhwangsa, site of Korea's oldest datable pagoda, a square-based structure made of stones cut to resemble bricks; Hwangryongsa, Silla's largest temple; and Sach'ŏnwangsa, built in 669, according to traditional accounts, to protect Silla against the armies of China.[106] The valley of Kyŏngju is dotted with tombs, some dating from the early Silla period. Archaeologists have not yet identified any as the burial place of a particular king, but several, such as the Kŭmgwan, Sobong, and Chŏnma mounds, are large and grand enough to be royal tombs.

Following Chinese practice, the builders of Silla tombs constructed stone chambers and covered them with mounded earth. This style, which differed from that common in Paekche and Koguryŏ, was transmitted to the Japanese. Articles made of gold were often deposited in these tombs, and some, such as crowns, belt buckles, and ornaments with pendants, are similar to those found among the Hsien-pei. Three-legged bronze wine vessels, glass ornaments, and items made of blue porcelain from Yüeh Province all were imported from China.

Although Silla was the last of the three Korean kingdoms to form and the latest to adopt Chinese culture, it proved to be the strongest contender for control of the peninsula. Silla's rise was abetted by the attacks on its northern neighbor by the Sui and T'ang dynasties. In 598 Sui used Koguryŏ's attack on the Chinese territory of Liao-hsi as a pretext to invade the Korean kingdom. The forces of the Sui emperor Wen-ti were defeated and forced to withdraw, but Wen-ti's successor Yang-ti ordered a renewed series of land and sea invasions of Koguryŏ, beginning in 612 and lasting until 614. The Chinese were repeatedly defeated with huge losses. Thirty years later under the T'ang dynasty emperor Tai-tsung, China again attacked Koguryŏ in 645–7 and was once again repelled. Finally in 660 T'ang China allied itself with Silla in southeast Korea, and their combined forces first conquered Paekche in 660 and then Koguryŏ in 668. The once great kingdom of Koguryŏ became a T'ang protectorate; but in 676, Silla, aided by remnants of the two defeated armies, drove the T'ang from their northern Korean stronghold. Korea's first unified kingdom was thereby established, with its capital at Kyŏngju. The flourishing culture of Silla influenced a wide region, stretching from Manchuria in the north to Japan across the sea.

106 Edward B. Adams, *Kyongju Guide: Cultural Spirit of Silla in Korea* (Seoul: Seoul International Tourist Publishing, 1979), pp. 51, 55, 135. The lower stories of the Bunhwangsa pagoda are intact and can be viewed today; the other two temples have been destroyed, but their foundation stones remain.

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Japan and Korea in the Burial Mound period

According to the *Wei chih,* when the Wa queen Himiko was buried, "a great mound was raised" to serve as her tomb.[107] Himiko's tomb has never been located, but hundreds of tombs dating from the third through the sixth centuries have been found all over Japan. Some tombs follow the Kyŏngju construction style, but others are dug vertically into the earth or horizontally into a hillside as in Koguryŏ and Paekche. Such burial practices give the age its name: the Burial Mound period. During these centuries, Japan grew from a society of small agrarian communities into a consolidated kingdom under the control of a monarch supported by chieftains of strong clans. This state, based in the Kinai District of central Honshu, is known as Yamato (see Chapter 2).

In the early years of the Burial Mound period, China – the source of much of the advanced technology that made its way to Japan in the Yayoi age – was beset by civil war. We hear no more of direct contact with Chinese courts after the end of the third century. The source of bronze mirrors dried up, and the Japanese were forced to manufacture this important ritual item for themselves. Fortunately, they had already learned enough technical skills from continental prototypes and tutors to produce such mirrors ably, as we can see from the many fine domestic examples found at archaeological sites. Chinese patterns were sometimes copied, often in abbreviated or stylized forms, but the Japanese also developed their own motifs.[108]

The confused situation in China forced Japan to turn to Korea as a source of high culture, technology, and luxury items. Though the Korean kingdoms were in general more advanced than Japan was during this period, there was not the overwhelming gulf that had marked earlier relations between the Wa people and the Chinese courts. The Japanese did not see themselves as tributary to the Korean kingdoms and felt free to interfere militarily on the peninsula. This attitude toward Korea is reflected in the *Nihon shoki,* which pictures the Kaya states (Japanese: Mimana) as a colony under the direct control of the Yamato court. But Korean sources do not substantiate this, and the nature of relations between Kaya and Japan remains a subject of much dispute. Whether a colony, a tributary state, or an ally, however, the Kaya league had the closest relationship to Japan of all the

107 *San-kuo chih* 30, p. 858; Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories,* p. 16.
108 Tanaka, *Kokyō,* pp. 24–27.

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Korean states. Kaya provided a foothold on the peninsula for the Japanese until the middle of the sixth century, when the small states were absorbed by Silla.

Perhaps the most important reason that the Japanese were anxious to maintain relations with southern Korea – and to define these relations in their own terms – was to guarantee access to Korean sources of iron. Iron, scarce in Japan, was crucial to both farming and warfare. Late Yayoi period weapons were made of iron, not stone or bronze, and any clan that wished to retain control of its territory had to maintain its supply of iron. Iron was also used extensively in agriculture for hoeing, digging, and plowing and for making wooden tools. Thus a control of the iron supply was important to clearing land and increasing agricultural yields, which provided the economic base for the expansion of powerful clans. As the Yamato rose to power and took steps toward forming a centralized state, the need to maintain control over the iron supply must have seemed paramount.

This need for iron motivated the fourth-century Japanese to develop close ties not only with Kaya but with Paekche as well. These ties are described in the Japanese chronicles written some four centuries later and substantiated by a contemporary source, the inscription on a sword found at the Isonokami Shrine in Nara Prefecture. According to this inscription, the sword was a gift of the Paekche king in 369. This sword may be the same one presented, according to the *Nihon shoki,* to Queen Jingū by the king of Paekche in 252.[109] (The discrepancy in dates need not trouble us, as many accounts in the *Nihon shoki* appear to be dated too early.) Both parties took advantage of the alliance: From 391 to 399 Japanese armies supported Paekche when it was attacked by the combined forces of Silla and Koguryŏ, and Paekche helped the Japanese establish diplomatic contact with the southern Chinese courts in the fifth century.

The *Nihon shoki* portrays the relationship between Paekche and Japan as peaceful and cooperative. For example, the chronicle reports that in 512, the Paekche king Muryŏng sent an "envoy with tribute" to the Yamato court. The envoy also bore a message requesting Yamato to cede four districts of Mimana (or Kaya) to Paekche. According to this message, the districts were so close to Paekche that "their fowl and dogs [could not] be kept apart," and they were so far from Japan that it would be difficult for the court to maintain control in the face of

109 *Nihon shoki,* bk. 9, Jingū 52/9/10, NKBT 67.358–9; Aston, 1.251; Daisanji Okinoshima gakujutsu chōsakai, *Munakata Okinoshima,* 3 vols. (Fukuoka-ken, Munakata-gun, Genkai-chō: Munakata taisha fukkō kiseikai, 1979), vol. 1, p. 469.

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Silla's expansion. A Yamato court official was ordered to implement Muryŏng's request, but his wife argued against it, declaring that certain kami had bestowed on the ruler Homuda (King Ōjin, who probably reigned in the early fifth century) "the gold and silver lands beyond the sea, namely, Koryŏ (Koguryŏ), Paekche, Silla and Imna (Mimana)." Nevertheless, the districts were ceded to Paekche in accord with the wishes of the Yamato ruler.[110] This account, and others written in the eighth century, leave little doubt that by that time the Japanese wanted to believe that the sixth-century Korean kingdoms had been tributary to the Yamato state.

Relations with Silla and Koguryŏ were not nearly so peaceful, and they sometimes deteriorated into armed conflict. One such episode was the conflict in 399, when the combined forces of Japan and Paekche attacked Silla and were driven back by Silla and its ally Koguryŏ.[111] Despite such an uneasy relationship, however, trade among them continued. Some of the iron ingots found at Japanese sites may have come from Silla, and the iron weapons may have come from Koguryŏ. According to the *Nihon shoki,* the Yamato court entertained guests from Koguryŏ in 324, and "ministers and functionaries were assembled and made to shoot at the iron shields and targets" presented by the visitors.[112] Whatever the official relationship between Japan and the Three Kingdoms, iron implements and the technique of making them came to Japan from all parts of the peninsula, along with methods of tomb construction, glazed pottery manufacture, and mounted warfare.

In the fifth century, the Japanese resumed direct contact with China, probably through the agency of Paekche. Although the situation in China was far from stable, it was once more settled enough to make diplomatic contacts possible and fruitful. Like Himiko, Japanese rulers of the Burial Mound period sent tribute embassies to the Chinese courts and sought Chinese acknowledgment of their authority.

Chinese sources record thirteen visits of envoys from "five kings of Wa" to the Eastern Chin, Sung, Ch'i, and Liang courts between 413 and 502. The first of the five is thought to have been King Nintoku, though there is a discrepancy between the dates noted in the Chinese records and the traditional dates (313–99) assigned to Nintoku's reign. The Chinese records note that the embassies from "Wa" came with

110 *Nihon shoki,* bk. 17, Keitai 6/12, NKBT 68.26–29; Aston, 2.7–9.
111 This episode is documented by the inscription on King Kwanggaet'o's stele.
112 *Nihon shoki,* bk. 11, Nintoku 12/8/10, NKBT 67.282–3; Aston, 1.282; *Okinoshima,* 1.359–61.

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tribute and that the Wa king (Nintoku) received an imperial appointment in 421. In 438 and 443, Wa kings (probably Hanzei and Ingyō) were designated as "generals who have subdued the east," a title also given to the last of the five kings (probably Yūryaku). Thus Japanese rulers sought and received Chinese confirmation of their dominant positions.[113] The benefits of reestablishing relations with the Chinese courts were economic as well as political, and Japan was once more in touch with a source of mirrors, silken goods, and technology such as methods of raising silkworms.[114]

In the later years of the Burial Mound period, Japanese clans accumulated regional power and began to form alliances, a process that culminated with the extention of Yamato control to nearly all of Japan. Contacts with the continent were crucial to this centralization process. Luxury items such as gold ornaments and elegant horse trappings might serve as symbols of authority; and iron, as we already noted, enhanced the technologies of warfare and of agriculture. But the influence of the continent was not limited to tools and weapons, or even to the skills needed to produce them. Immigrants from the Korean peninsula – some perhaps Chinese-lineage refugees from Lo-lang and Tai-fang – played an important role in the transmission of political ideas and administrative methods. Many important court figures in Ōjin's reign, for example, were immigrants from Paekche.[115] During Kimmei's reign, a Korean named Wō-jin-mi was assigned the task of keeping a record of the taxes levied on shipments.[116] Immigrants of all social strata contributed to the political and economic development of Burial Mound Japan. An item in the *Nihon shoki*, dated in the seventh year of Ōjin's reign, relates that men from Korea (Koguryŏ, Paekche, Silla, and Kaya) were ordered by the monarch to construct an irrigation pond,[117] and laborers from Silla were employed on a flood control project during Nintoku's reign.[118]

The introduction of the Chinese writing system in the fifth century was one of Paekche's most important gifts to the Japanese. By the middle of the next century, the Yamato court was utilizing written records to facilitate administrative matters and thus to extend and solidify its political control. Literacy among the aristocracy also enhanced the acceptance of another import from Paekche, the religion of

113 Okazaki, "Sanseiki yori nanaseiki no tairiku ni okeru kokusai kankei to Nihon," p. 637.
114 Okazaki, "Kokusai kankei to Nihon," p. 638. 115 Ibid.
116 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 19, Kimmei 14/7/4, NKBT 68.104–5; Aston, 2.69. Also see Okazaki, "Kokusai kankei to Nihon," p. 638.
117 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 10, Ōjin 7/9, NKBT 67.366–7; Aston 1.257.
118 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 11, Nintoku 11/10, NKBT 67.394–5; Aston, 1.281–2.

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Buddhism. According to the *Nihon shoki,* the Paekche king sent an image of the Buddha and several volumes of scriptures to the Japanese court in 552.[119] Though Buddhism occupied a precarious position for a time, alternately embraced and rejected by the court, its symbolism contributed to the consolidation of political and economic power (see Chapter 7). Buddhism also stimulated the development of art and architecture. Japanese styles were usually developed from continental prototypes introduced by immigrant artists from Paekche and the other Korean kingdoms. Monks from the continent also contributed to Japan's absorption of sophisticated forms of Chinese learning, and the Japanese monks who traveled to the continent in the eighth and ninth centuries continued to infuse Japanese Buddhism with new ideas and modes of expression.

Relations with the continent were crucial to the development of a unified Japanese state based on a literate and technologically advanced society. The control of relations with the continent was one decisive factor in the formation of the Japanese state under the control of the Yamato clan. The victors, based in the Kinai region, established the line of hereditary sovereigns who occupied the throne in later periods. Archaeological findings from the island of Okinoshima – off the coast of Kyushu and far from Yamato – reveal the importance of sea routes to the continent in this process and suggest ways in which these routes were established and maintained by the Yamato court.

OKINOSHIMA, THE YAMATO COURT, AND THE CONTINENT

Okinoshima, since prehistoric times the site of an especially sacred shrine, lies in Genkai Bay, directly on the sea route between Kyushu and the southeastern tip of the Korean peninsula. On the island is one of three Munakata shrines, each dedicated to a female kami. Okinoshima is important to our inquiry for two reasons: It was an early and continuing locus of contact between Japan and the continent, and its emergence as a religious site during the Burial Mound period can be connected with the rise of the Yamato kingdom. Archaeological evidence, such as a narrow bronze spear of Korean origin discovered at a Yayoi site, indicates Okinoshima's importance in early contacts between Japan and Korea. The richest store of archaeological treasures, however, comes from the fourth through the ninth centuries: Reli-

119 *Nihon shoki,* bk. 19, Kimmei 13/10, NKBT 68.100–1; Aston, 2.65

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gious artifacts, many of continental origin, have been found at twenty-three places in the forested, boulder-strewn vicinity of the shrine.[120]

An examination of the evidence at Okinoshima shows that religious worship on the island developed in four stages, as ritual sites moved from the tops of boulders to their shadows and then into the open air. In the first stage, the fourth through the fifth centuries, *magatama*, mirrors, knives, and swords were presented as offerings at *iwakura* (also called *iwasaka*), boulder-top altars formed out of piled-up stones.[121] It was thought that when offerings were made, kami descended to these altars. Objects found at these sites are similar to Japanese grave goods from the same period: mirrors from Han and Wei China and their Japanese imitations, bracelets made of dark green nephrite, iron weapons and tools, and steatite articles.

In the second stage, from the fifth through the seventh centuries, ritual objects were offered to the kami at sites in the shade of huge boulders. These objects included Japanese imitations of Chinese bronze mirrors, personal and equestrian ornaments, pottery of both domestic and continental manufacture, metal miniatures of everyday objects, and ritual articles of steatite. Some of these articles, such as gold rings, equestrian ornaments, and iron ingots, are similar to those found in Silla tombs dating from Korea's Three Kingdoms period (from around the fourth through seventh centuries). Fragments of a glass bowl of Sassanian Persian origin have also been found at one site, indicating that some items had made their way to Japan from a very great distance. Articles like those discovered at Okinoshima in this second stage have also been found in Japanese tombs of the late fifth and sixth centuries.

In the third stage, the seventh through early eighth centuries, rituals were conducted partly in the shadows of boulders and partly in the open. Ritual objects included those made of steatite – larger than earlier examples – and metal miniatures of weaving and spinning implements. Artifacts discovered at one site include two Eastern Wei gilt bronze finials in the shapes of dragons' heads, and fragments of a T'ang dynasty three-colored (*san-ts'ai*) long-necked vase.

One site dates from the final stage, the eighth through early ninth centuries. Artifacts found at the open-air altar (*kamudokoro*) there include small bronze mirrors, bronze bells (*suzu*), domestic and continental pottery, metal miniatures, ritual objects made of steatite, and bronze coins minted in Japan. Twelve small Japanese copies of T'ang

120 *Okinoshima*, 1.621. 121 Ibid., 1.622.

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three-colored ceramics have also been found. The steatite articles were probably used in purification rites (*katashiro*) and include images of humans, horses, and boats. The coins are of a type that were first minted in 818 and became rare after the beginning of the tenth century.

The first and second stages are of special interest to this inquiry. During this time Yamato gained firm control of distant regions, including northern Kyushu. Although this was accomplished partly through military action, the manipulation of religious symbols also played a crucial role. Information gained from archaeological investigations on Okinoshima and from related historical sources indicates the way in which contacts with the continent affected the birth of the centralized Yamato state.

A mountain that floats in the sea, Okinoshima ultimately derived its sanctity from the belief that certain mountains were the homes of kami. People believed that one of the three Munakata kami resided on the island, just as they thought that kami lived on spectacular mountains such as Miwa and Kasuga in the Kinai and Akagi and Futara in the Kantō. Lowland farmers built mountaintop shrines to worship the kami who might then make the rice crops prosper, and both farmers and fishermen built shrines on Okinoshima, in hopes of abundant yields.

Local clan chieftains also worshiped at Okinoshima, in hopes of claiming special ties with the kami that would add religious sanction to their political authority and help them extend their control over land and people. The clan that dominated the area of the main Munakata Shrine on the northern coast of Kyushu was called the Munakata no Kimi. Several keyhole-shaped tombs in this area were probably built for Munakata clan leaders. One, a large stone chamber with an opening tunneled into the side of a hill, dates from the final years of the Burial Mound period and is thought to be the grave of Munakata no Kimi Tokuzen, who appears as father of an imperial consort in a *Nihon shoki* episode dated 673.[122] This suggests that by the seventh-century reign of Emperor Temmu the Munakata clan had developed strong ties with Yamato-lineage rulers.

The Munakata probably emerged as a powerful local clan in the fourth century, when close contacts were first established between Japan and southern Korea, especially Paekche. The clan's power base lay along the coast of Genkai Bay, a natural harbor for ships sailing to Korea. Local fishermen, who often sailed the open sea between Kyushu and Okinoshima and then to Korea, were under Munakata

122 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 29, Temmu 2 (673) 2/27, NKBT 68.410–11; Aston, 2.322.

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control. Ritual objects left at sacred places on Okinoshima were no doubt taken there by these fishermen.

The three kami of the Munakata shrines were venerated not only by the clan but also by the Yamato court. A brief quotation from the *Nihon shoki* points to the reason. This passage states: "You three kami shall descend to Michi-no-naka (the pathway to Korea) and help the imperial descendants of heaven, who are to hold you in reverence."[123] This passage portrays the Munakata kami as the deities of a region – and by implication a clan – that could link the Yamato court with Korea, the source of high technology, culture, treasures, and iron. Other passages in the chronicles show how highly these kami were regarded by Yamato. In the reign of Yūryaku, the kami warned the ruler against a planned invasion of Silla, and the invasion was called off.[124] Both *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* myths describe the Munakata kami as the daughters of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, claimed by the Yamato clan as their ancestral kami.[125]

Items found at Okinoshima sites dating from the first and second stages link the island with the continent. These articles include iron ingots like those found in Silla tombs in the Kyŏngju and Pusan regions. Weaving implements and their gilt-bronze miniatures have also been found on Okinoshima. The *Hizen fudoki* suggests that the people of the Munakata area excelled in weaving, and a *Nihon shoki* item for Ōjin's reign tells of a delegation sent to one of the southern courts of China to obtain seamstresses, one of whom was given to Munakata to serve its kami.[126] This item may refer to one of the delegations from "the five kings of Wa" noted in Chinese dynastic histories.[127] At other archaeological sites in the Munakata region, items similar to Okinoshima relics have been found, including pottery and ritual objects made of steatite. It seems likely that some of these were intended for use at the Okinoshima shrine.

The Yamato court sought the support of the Munakata chieftains, who controlled the shortest sea route between Japan and the Korean peninsula, as well as sailors familiar with that route. In return, the court honored the Munakata kami and presented the shrine with valued offerings.[128] Thus religious beliefs and symbols were used to link the court with a clan that occupied a strategic position in relations with the continent.

123 *Okinoshima*, 1.477; *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.108–9; with a different interpretation in Aston, 1.37.
124 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 14, Yūryaku 8/3, NKBT 67.480–1; Aston, 2.353.
125 *Okinoshima*, 1.475–8.
126 *Hizen no kuni fudoki*, NKBT 2.384–5; *Nihon shoki*, bk. 10, NKBT 67.380–1; Aston, 1.271.
127 *Okinoshima*, 1.473. 128 Ibid., 1:472.

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The Munakata region served as a passageway between Japan and the continent from the Burial Mound age through the first century of the Heian period. Fifth-century missions to China may have sailed from Munakata ports, and rites to ensure safety on the rough open sea were probably conducted at Munakata's sanctuary on Okinoshima.[129] Such rituals were definitely held in later times; in 838, when an official mission to China finally set sail from Hakata near Munakata, prayers for the mission's safety were offered to the Munakata kami. Some of the artifacts found on Okinoshima, such as the three-colored vase from T'ang China, may have been presented by envoys grateful to have returned alive.[130] After 894, when Sugawara no Michizane convinced the court to discontinue such hazardous missions, ritual activity at Okinoshima declined.[131]

At the end of the Burial Mound period, Japan entered the domain of written history. The court, operating from its power base on the Yamato plain in the Kinai, had obtained the allegiance of clans in all but the most distant regions of northern Japan. Written records were now used to carry out government functions; Buddhism was enthusiastically embraced; and Chinese technology stimulated such diverse fields as calendar making, architecture, and the construction of irrigation systems. Missions from Japan to China no longer sought only luxury goods, or even Chinese recognition of a Japanese ruler's authority, but sophisticated forms of learning as well.

If Japan was ready by this time for an episode of conscious, systematic cultural borrowing, the situation in China was appropriate as well. In 589, China was reunified under the Sui dynasty for the first time in over 350 years. The Sui collapsed in the reign of its third emperor but was replaced in 618 by the T'ang, a cosmopolitan, long-lived dynasty. In search of new techniques to achieve control and strengthen political authority, the Japanese of the mid-seventh century attempted to emulate China's centralized imperial system, its bureaucratic state, and its methods of controlling the provinces and collecting taxes. In addition, the military expansion of early T'ang posed a threat to Japan and forced the court to strengthen its defenses, a process that contributed to the centralization of the state. When the T'ang pulled back in the late seventh century – leaving Japan unthreatened and Korea to Silla rule – East Asia entered a long phase of stability and peace. During the next hundred years, continental culture was sought, absorbed, and adapted to the needs of a maturing Japanese civilization.

129 Ibid., 1.474. 130 Ibid., 1.624–5. 131 Ibid.

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CHAPTER 6

EARLY KAMI WORSHIP

From prehistoric times the Japanese have revered animistic spirits and deities called *kami*. Eventually the worship of kami developed into a religious system known as Shinto or "the kami way." The two Chinese characters used in Japan for writing "Shinto" had been used for centuries in China to refer to the supernatural or the mysterious. Adopted in Japan at the end of the sixth century A.D., these characters were employed to distinguish native kami worship from Buddhism (the Buddha way), recently imported from the Asian continent. Early sources suggest that Shinto was then synonomous with the old word *kamunagara*, which denoted a "way" handed down by the kami themselves without human revision.

By the time that Japan's native religion was identified as Shinto, kami worship had moved beyond awe of natural forces to institutionalized rituals believed to ensure protection and prosperity for the clans (*uji*), and to provide religious sanction for the clan chieftains and territorial rulers. This chapter will therefore be devoted mainly to showing how kami beliefs and practices, while retaining their animistic core, moved from simple to complex forms.

GENERAL PROBLEMS

The concept of kami

The standard translation of kami is "deity," a word suggesting the Western concept of a transcendental divinity such as in the Judaeo-Christian God. But the gulf between divinity and humanity found in the Judaic religions does not exist in Shinto. Even though the Shinto kami are given credit for creating various parts of the universe, kami are neither omniscient nor omnipotent, and unlike the ancient Greek gods, they are not necessarily immortal.

The classic definition of kami is the one advanced by Motoori

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Norinaga (1730–1801), a distinguished scholar of Japanese history and literature:

> Kami are, first of all, deities of heaven and earth and spirits venerated at shrines, as well as the humans, birds and beasts, plants and trees, oceans, and mountains that have exceptional powers and ought to be revered. Kami include not only mysterious beings that are noble and good but also malignant spirits that are extraordinary and deserve veneration.[1]

Western scholars of Shinto tend to accept Motoori's definition: F. H. Ross wrote that kami are mysterious beings associated with feelings of "awesomeness" and "the holy,"[2] and A. C. Underwood defined kami as including all supernatural beings, good or bad.[3]

In general, the Japanese believed that any extraordinary phenomenon possessed charismatic power. That is, the spirit of a kami might reside in heavenly bodies such as the sun, moon, and stars or in the forces of nature such as wind, rain, and lightning. Thunder, for instance, was called "the kami that rumbles." Striking topographical features such as oceans, rivers, and mountains, or even manufactured objects (buildings, boats, combs, or hearths) might house a kami. A charismatic ruler or aristocrat was often named a kami, and certain animals were known as kami, such as tigers, wolves, hares, and serpents, if they were exceptional for their species. An ancient myth even tells of a peach seed with the power to repel evil demons and names the seed Ōkamutsumi (the "great kami seed"). The charisma that a kami possesses resembles *mana*, the extraordinary power that the people of Melanesia associate with supernatural phenomena or fearsome objects.

Although some spirits were honored and feared by the ancient Japanese and called kami, many were given other names with subtle differ-

1 Motoori Norinaga, *Kojikiden* pt. 1, chap. 3, vol. 9 of *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1976), p. 125.

2 Floyd Hiatt Ross, *Shintō: The Way of Japan* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 32.

3 A. C. Underwood, *Shintōism: The Indigenous Religion of Japan* (London: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 32. Other Western scholars have grappled with the essential nature of kami belief and worship: see D. C. Holtom, "The Meaning of Kami," *Monumenta Nipponica* 3, no. 1 (1940): 1–27; 3, no. 2 (1940): 392–413; and 4, no. 2 (1942): 351–94; Richard Arthur Brabazon Ponsonby-Fane, *The Vicissitudes of Shintō* (Kyoto: Ponsonby Memorial Society, 1963); and Jean Herbert, *Shintō: At the Fountain-Head of Japan* (New York: Stein & Day, 1967). Studies by two distinguished Japanese scholars of Shinto have been translated into English: Tsunetsugu Muraoka, *Studies in Shintō Thought*, trans. Delmer M. Brown and James T. Araki (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1964); and Genichi Kato, *A Historical Study of the Religious Development of Shintō*, trans. Shoyu Hanayama (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1973). Other Western works on Shinto are listed in Genichi Kato, Karl Reitz, and Wilhelm Schiffer, comps., *A Bibliography of Shintō in Western Languages, from the Oldest Times till 1952* (Tokyo: Meiji jingū shamusho, 1953); and in Arcadio Schwade, *Shintō Bibliography in Western Languages: Bibliography on Shintō and Religious Sects, Intellectual Schools and Movements Influenced by Shintōism* (Leiden: Brill, 1986).

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ences in meaning. There were *tama* (souls), *mono* (demons), *tsuchi* and *mi* (animistic spirits), and *chi* and *itsu* (spirits that possessed magical powers). Kami were chosen from that crowd of spirits, elevated in rank, further sanctified, and later anthropomorphized. The kami of the mountains, for instance, were thought to control the spirits, animals, and plants in a specific mountain region, and the kami of the ocean to control ocean life. In a later stage of development, such kami were often given names and selected as tutelary deities by important clans. The Ochi clan of Shikoku's Iyo Province (present-day Ehime Prefecture) adopted a mountain kami as its tutelary deity (*ujigami*), and an ocean kami was taken as the *ujigami* of the Azumi clan based in the seacoast province of Chikuzen (Fukuoka Prefecture).

Finally, the most important kami often possessed the power to create. Though there is no equivalent in Shinto to the Judaic God's creation of the cosmos and everything in it, kami did give birth to familiar portions of the universe. Myths tell us, for instance, that the husband and wife kami, Izanagi and Izanami, created the islands of Japan.[4] Moreover, the word *musubi* attached to the names of many kami – the high-ranking Takamimusubi is one important example – connotes creative power. Creator and life-giving kami such as Izanagi, Izanami, Takamimusubi, and Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess who became the ancestral kami of the imperial clan) all occupied high positions in the "myriad kami" pantheon appearing in Japan's earliest recorded myths.

Ethics and ritual purity

The ethical content of Shinto is weak in comparison with that of such universalistic religions as Christianity and Buddhism. Shinto stresses ritual purity rather than ethics and morality, and Shinto rituals are designed to counteract ritual pollution. The word *tsumi* indicates an offense or pollution that must be neutralized by ritual cleansing. The concept of *tsumi* also differs from the Christian concept of original sin, an evil inherent in human nature and one that can be purged only by confessing to God and receiving his forgiveness. The Shinto concept also differs from the "carnal passions" that obstruct one's understanding and acceptance of Buddhist truth. *Tsumi*, moreover, were not believed

4 *Kojiki*, bk. 1 in Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 54–57; trans. Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), pp. 49, 53–54. *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.81–90, trans. W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (hereafter cited as Aston) (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pt. 1, pp. 12–18.

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to result in retribution after death. *Tsumi* included offenses for which a person was responsible as well as calamities over which he or she had no control. Certain acts resulting in bodily harm to others were lumped together with epidemics and natural calamities as forms of *tsumi* that were referred to as "troublesome things" (*magagoto*). In general the ancient Japanese equated physical purity and brightness with righteousness and virtue; conversely, physical defilement and darkness were seen as evil and injustice. Ablutions were used as magic rites to eliminate *tsumi*.

As Japanese mythology demonstrates, the concept of *tsumi* was thought to have developed in the "age of the kami," long before humans inhabited the earth. In one myth, the kami Izanagi visited his dead wife Izanami in the land of the dead beneath the earth (Yomi no Kuni). After Izanagi returned, he purified himself, by washing in the ocean, from the pollution he had acquired in that dreadful place. The kami of misfortune (Magatsuhi) was born from this pollution, and to counteract that calamitous event, the kami of purity (Naobi no kami) was born from the water. Accordingly, pollution originated in the land of the dead and could be removed by washing in water, a ritual based on Izanagi's action.[5]

Still another myth assigns archetypal offenses against ritual purity to the age of the kami. This tale concerns the violent actions of Susa no O, younger brother of the Sun Goddess, when he was in the heavenly regions of Takamanohara. Susa no O violated his sister's rice paddies in a number of ways: He destroyed the irrigation channels, the bamboo irrigation pipes, and the divisions between the paddy fields; and he sowed the field with tares and set up his own markers of occupancy. In other words, he interfered in various ways with agricultural production. He also committed defiling acts such as strewing excrement around his sister's palace and throwing a piebald colt (which he had skinned from back to front) into her room. Some theorize that the designation of this act as an offense points to the post-645 ban on the sacrifice of live animals.[6]

The *tsumi* termed "offenses of heaven," exorcised during the Great Purification Ceremony (Ōharae) conducted twice annually at the imperial palace in ancient times, were equated with Susa no O's actions. These *tsumi* included damage to sacred fields where rice was grown for festival offerings and desecrations of sacred places, and they were

5 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.63–71, Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 61–70; and *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.94–95, Aston, 1.24–25.

6 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.78–81, Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 79–80; and *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.111–17, Aston, 1.40–49.

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apparently labeled "offenses of heaven" simply because they had first occurred, according to the myths, on the High Plain of Heaven (Takamanohara). The Ōharae ceremony's ritual prayers (*norito*), recorded in the tenth-century *Engishiki*, list a second category of *tsumi*, "offenses of earth." These were probably so named because they included misfortunes in human society and had no prototype in the Takamanohara myths. These offenses included crimes and illnesses, as well as wounding another person so that his or her blood was spilled, desecrating a corpse, committing bestiality and incest, and contracting leprosy. Also listed are sorcery, natural calamities, and insect blight.[7] The fact that the *norito* did not cite actions that were in later ages considered criminal, such as murder (without the spilling of blood) and theft, only underlines the gap between the ancient Japanese view of *tsumi* and more theologically advanced concepts of sin.

A special Ōharae ceremony was conducted three months before the Daijōsai, the Great Feast of Enthronement that followed an emperor's enthronement. This Ōharae, held to purge ritual impurities that might harm agricultural production, involved magical rites to expel such *tsumi* to the land of the dead across the sea (Ne no Kuni)[8] and to pray for a bountiful harvest. Later on, the ceremony lost its agricultural character, and rites were conducted to prevent such mundane misfortunes as illness, natural calamities, and certain crimes. Thus, "offenses of earth" were added to the list of "troublesome things" that had to be purged. The Ōharae ceremony customarily utilized a scapegoat, a doll that took on all offenses and was cast into the river and exiled. This rite mirrored the myth in which Susa no O was expelled from heaven for his violent actions.[9]

7 *Minazuki tsugomori no ōharae*, included in *Kojiki*, NKBT 1.423–6. The ritual appears in English translation in Felicia Gressitt Bock, *Engi-shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era*, Books 6–10 (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1972), pp. 85–87. For a comparison of the acts of pollution committed by Susa no O with the "offenses of heaven" listed in the Ōharae, see Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 403–4.

8 The *norito* or ritual prayers in this Ōharae ceremony refer to the land of the dead as Ne no Kuni, a land beyond the sea. The ancient Japanese image of the land of the dead, however, combined two concepts of separate origin. The concept of Ne no Kuni was probably derived from south Asian beliefs that the netherland lay across the sea. The name, which means "root country," suggests that Ne no Kuni was also seen as the original overseas homeland of the Japanese people. Ne no Kuni eventually came to be identified with Yomi no Kuni, the land of the dead beneath the earth in beliefs of north Asian lineage. For a discussion of Ne no Kuni, see Yanagita Kunio, "Kaijō no michi," in *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 85–109.

9 The *Engishiki*, in Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Shintei zohō: Kokushi taikei* (hereafter cited as KT) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1937), vol. 26, p. 26; Bock, *Engi-shiki*, 1. 83, lists effigies among the artifacts used in the biannual Ōharae. For the Ōharae ritual, see the *Engishiki*, KT 26.169–70, Bock, *Engi-shiki*, 2.87.

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The common element that links all *tsumi* is their danger to the cosmic and social order.[10] The primitive Japanese believed that society and the cosmos were interrelated and that disturbing one could disturb the other. As violations of the normal order of things, *tsumi* were to be feared because it was thought that they would invite calamity. Improper sexual relations, for instance, might lead to poor harvests. Thus rules for conduct were not based on principles considered inherently moral, and the danger caused by improper actions or unfortunate events might be removed completely by conducting the appropriate magical rites.

Shinto literature and the structure of Shinto mythology

Various literary and historical works of the eighth to the tenth centuries provide considerable information about Shinto practices and the development of Shinto mythology. Particularly useful texts include the semihistorical chronicles *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon shoki* (720), compiled under the auspices of the imperial court; *fudoki*, provincial gazetteers also compiled under imperial orders; the *Kōtai jingū gishikichō* and *Toyuke no miya gishikichō* (804), records of the Grand Shrine at Ise; Imbe no Hironari's *Kogoshūi* (807), which records the history and traditions of his family; and the *Engishiki* (Procedures of the Engi period, 927) which includes ceremonial prayers (*norito*), descriptions of imperial rites, and records of officially sanctioned shrines.[11]

Shinto mythology is described most systematically in the "age of the kami" chapters of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, chronicles compiled to justify the efforts of one powerful clan, based on the Yamato plain of central Honshu, to extend its rule over Japan and call itself the imperial clan. The *Kojiki*, in particular, takes hitherto unrelated myths and weaves them into a narrative tale that moves directly from the creation of the universe to the creation of the imperial house. This neat sequential arrangement suggests manipulation for political purposes. Indeed, political rather than ethical or theological concepts lie at the core of

10 This hypothesis is advanced by Ôbayashi Taryō, "Kodai Nihon ni okeru bunrui no ronri," in Ôbayashi Taryō, ed., *Shinwa, shakai, sekaikan* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1972), pp. 329–56; and Matsumae Takeshi, "Shizoku shakai no shisō," in Furukawa Tetsushi and Ishida Ichirō, eds., in vol. 1 of *Nihon shisōshi kōza* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1977), pp. 7–26.

11 *Fudoki*, NKBT, vol. 2, trans. Michiko Yamaguchi Aoki, *Izumo fudoki* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971); "Kōtai jingū gishikichō," in Hanawa Hokinoichi, ed., *Gunsho ruijū* (Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1898), vol. 1, pp. 1–51; Ônakatomi no Matsugu et al., eds., "Toyuke-gū gishiki chō," in *Gunsho ruijū*, 1.52–83; Imbe no Hironari, ed., "Kogoshūi," in *Gunsho ruijū*, 16.1–19, trans. Genchi Katō and Hikoshirō Hoshino, *Kogoshūi: Gleanings from Ancient Stories* (London: Curzon Press, and New York: Barnes & Noble, 1972, reproduction of 1926 ed.).

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this "official" formulation, and religious emotion is lacking. The myths, embellished and modified to trace a single line of descent from the ancestral kami to a succession of human rulers, were clearly meant to strengthen and sanctify the imperial clan's control over the whole of Japan.

According to the thesis proposed by the literary historian Tsuda Sōkichi, the myths were consciously manipulated by Yamato court nobles of the sixth and seventh centuries. The principal kami – the Sun Goddess, Susa no O no Mikoto, the creator kami couple (Izanagi and Izanami), and the kami of Izumo (Ōnamuchi) – were not venerated among ordinary people. Rather, myths about these kami, according to Tsuda, were products of a conscious effort to construct a political ideology for the Yamato court.[12] Tsuda's is the most scientific, critical, and objective of the scholarly explanations advanced before World War II. In the ultranationalistic years preceding and during that war, his theory was suppressed by the authorities, who claimed that it showed irreverence to the imperial house. But after the war, when the emperor renounced any claim to divine descent, Tsuda's thesis was once more acclaimed and was further developed by other scholars.

But such an explanation seems to suggest too much conscious rationalism by early Japanese aristocrats. Although it is undoubtedly true that the myths were revised and structured during the sixth and seventh centuries for political purposes and that the kami pantheon was arranged with the imperial ancestor kami (the Sun Goddess) at its apex, most scholars now maintain that these myths and kami originated among the people, that the kami began as nature spirits, and that the myths were originally animistic tales told by peasants and fishermen.

Several factors point to this conclusion. Similar tales appear in popular folklore. Even today, we can pick out primitive elements in the shrine rituals that venerate these kami, and identify these elements with local beliefs and customs. These myths, moreover, manifest influence from other parts of Asia. For example, one Japanese myth about the marriage of the creator kami Izanagi and Izanami is similar to tales told in southeast Asian folklore.[13] The stories of how Izanami and Izanagi gave birth to the islands of Japan and how Izanami was killed and descended to the land of the dead also have their counterparts in

12 Tsuda Sōkichi, *Nihon koten no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1948), vol. 1.

13 Matsumoto Nobuhiro, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1929), pp. 168–80; Matsumura Takeo, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Baifūkan, 1955), vol. 2, pp. 232–72; Matsumae Takeshi, *Nihon shinwa to kodai seikatsu* (Tokyo: Yūseidō shuppan, 1970), pp. 108–53.

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Polynesia.[14] Folk tales of the Miao people of southern China resemble the tale of how the Sun Goddess became angry with her brother Susa no O's violence, retreating to a cave and remaining there until she was coaxed to come out.[15] Korean myths contain motifs similar to that in the one about the descent to earth of the Sun Goddess's grandson (Hononinigi), whose descendants, according to the chronicles, became Japan's emperors.[16] Moreover, the *Kojiki* tale of the marriage between a human maiden and the kami Ōmono Nushi is similar to Korean and Manchurian myths.[17] It thus is likely that these imported elements were transmitted through migrations and visits over a long period of time and were gradually incorporated into popular mythology. Thus the chronicle myths seem to have emerged from popular sources and then to have been consciously embellished, modified, and arranged for political purposes.

Periodization

From the myths that appear in the chronicles and gazetteers (*fudoki*), the general outlines of kami-worship development can be roughly traced. Because Shinto is a complex belief system that has retained primitive elements even while gradually becoming more sophisticated, the myths themselves represent levels of evolution from simple animism to a political ideology supporting the Yamato court. Of particular value for such historical reconstruction is the *Nihon shoki*, which contains different versions of a particular myth, in addition to the one presented as "authentic." These variations often represent different stages in a process of mythological and cultural evolution.

According to Mishina Shōei, Japanese mythology developed in three distinct stages. In the "primitive-myth" stage of the Yayoi period (approximately 200 B.C. to A.D. 250), apolitical myths functioned as rituals of worship and petition designed to secure certain effects by magical means. The next period, the "ceremonial-myth" stage (A.D.

14 Matsumoto, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, pp. 157–94; Matsumae Takeshi, *Nihon shinwa no shin kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1961), pp. 32–61.

15 Matsumura, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, 3.71–73; Ishida Eiichirō, *Momotarō no haha* (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 1956), pp. 56–57. Ōbayashi Taryō discusses similarities between southeast Asian solar eclipse myths and the Amaterasu myth in *Nihon shinwa no kigen* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1961), pp. 121–40.

16 Matsumura, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, 3.510–16; Mishina Shōei, *Nihon shinwa ron* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960), pp. 28–32, 122–143; Oka Masao, Ishida Eiichirō, Egami Namio, and Yawata Ichirō, *Nihon minzoku no kigen* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1958), pp. 70–73.

17 Torii Ryūzō, *Yūshi izen no Nippon* (Tokyo: Isobe kōyōdō, 1925), pp. 428–48; Seki Keigo, "The Spool of Thread," in Richard Dorson, ed., *Studies in Japanese Folklore* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 267–8.

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250 to 500 in the Burial Mound age), is characterized by myths focused on rites for ensuring the production of good rice harvests. As the Yamato court gradually extended its dominion during this period, myths came to reflect the local chieftains' acts of submission to central authority. The Yamato ruler's role as a sacred priest-king was strengthened, and to some extent, secular government and worship were fused. Thus Mishina's second-period myths contained both political and religious elements that were reflected in rituals conducted by both the Yamato court and local clans. In Mishina's third "political-myth" period, myths lost much of their religious character as their political overtone was deepened. This period began in the late sixth century and ended in the eighth, when the myths – embellished and revised to serve political ends – were recorded in the chronicles.[18]

Though I agree in general with Mishina's periodization, I suggest a more complex scheme that traces the development of Shinto as a whole. This four-part scheme, providing the framework for the remainder of this chapter, takes in all aspects of Shinto from primitive times to the end of the Nara period in 784. It has emerged from a consideration not only of myths but also of beliefs, festivals, rites, the institutionalized priesthood, architecture, and iconography.

In my first period, the Jōmon–Yayoi age, the roots of Shinto developed from animistic forms of nature worship. Though religious practices were changed during the succeeding Burial Mound period, many elements of early nature worship were retained. In this first period, people venerated spirits of the mountains, the fields, and streams near their villages, and they related tales that pertained to nature and the origins of the most remarkable features of their environment. People of this period developed magical rites to aid them in hunting, fishing, and farming, and they told tales that explained the origin of these rites.

During my second period – the fourth and fifth centuries and roughly the first two centuries of the Yamato state – animistic spirits were personalized, honored at special places of worship, and frequently adopted as tutelary deities of local clans, which had seized control of certain regions.

My third period, spanning the sixth and seventh centuries of Yamato history, is highlighted by the Yamato court's use of Shinto to

18 Mishina, *Nihon shinwa ron*, pp. 66–69. A recent study of interaction between kami worship and political control at the second "ceremonial-myth" stage was made by Robert S. Ellwood in "The Sujin Religious Revolution," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17, nos. 1 and 2 (June and September 1990): 199–217.

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centralize its control. Efforts of this sort were made first in some regions as early as the fifth century but were expanded and intensified during the sixth and seventh. The extension of the court's sacred authority eroded the clans' sacred authority as clan rituals and myths were incorporated into the ceremonial structure that supported and sanctified Yamato rule.

In my fourth and final period – the late seventh and eighth centuries – the adoption of Chinese political and cultural forms was associated not only with the formation of the sinified *ritsuryō* state but also with the further development of Shinto as a prop for the centralized power of the "imperial system." Though the imperial institution was modeled on that of the Chinese bureaucratic state, ancient Shinto rites, myths, and beliefs were also revised and affirmed, thereby establishing the emperor as the highest Shinto priest of the land and a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess. National chronicles were compiled in this last period in order to record the official version of Japan's historicized mythology and to show that each emperor was descended directly from the Sun Goddess. A Council of Kami Affairs (Jingikan) was placed directly under the emperor in the new bureaucratic order, and Japanese emperors began to refer to themselve in imperial edicts as manifest kami (*akitsukami*). At the same time, Shinto itself was being changed by the culture imported from China and Korea, perhaps most strongly by Buddhism, which influenced all aspects of native beliefs, from ritual to iconography.

Scholars of modern-day Shinto often divide the religion into two types: the popular Shinto of village shrines, and the state Shinto of rites performed under the auspices of the central government. The former is rooted in early animistic worship and focuses on the veneration of mountain kami, kami of the fields, roadside guardians, and kami that protect the livelihood of the common people. State Shinto, on the other hand, began to emerge in my fourth period when a strong centralized and sinified legal order was formed and Japan's "emperor system" was developed. But there has always been interaction between the two. Popular beliefs have continued to lie at the base of ceremonies performed at state shrines. State ceremonies have continued to affect popular kami worship as local heroes were transformed into national heroes and as imperial representatives were dispatched to validate and control worship at local shrines. But state recognition and regulation gradually eroded the original popular character of kami worship at the village level.

In order to reconstruct the history of ancient Shinto, the available literature must be examined scientifically and critically. In addition,

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archaeological methods must be applied to the study of religious artifacts, and folklorists' methods must be used in the examination of ceremonies currently conducted at Shinto shrines that undoubtedly contain elements from the past. Our ability to retrace ancient Shinto has been enhanced considerably by the proliferation of research in the free intellectual atmosphere that followed World War II. The efforts of many postwar scholars have solved some of the riddles of the ancient period.

Basic research in this area has been carried out by numerous scholars. Naoki Kōjirō, Tsukushi Nobuzane, Okada Seishi, and I have studied the origins of the worship of the Sun Goddess and of festivals held at Ise Shrine, the most important national shrine and the one where the Sun Goddess has been worshiped since the beginning of my fourth period. Ueda Masaaki and Yoshii Iwao have examined relationships between provincial clans and the ancient imperial court. Mizuno Yū, Torigoe Kenzaburō, and I have conducted research into the legends of Japan's Izumo region. Saigō Nobutsuna, Tanaka Hatsuo, and I have studied court ceremonies such as the Great Feast of Enthronement conducted at the beginning of a new reign and the yearly winter festival, the Chinkonsai ("Soul-quieting festival"). In the field of art history, important contributions have been made in Shinto architecture by Fukuyama Toshio, Watanabe Yasutada, and Inagaki Eizō. Kageyama Haruki's studies of iconography, Ōba Iwao's archaeological investigations, and Nishida Nagao's intensive examination of old shrine documents have been important.[19] In this chapter,

19 Naoki Kōjirō, *Nihon kodai no shizoku to tennō* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1965); Tsukushi Nobuzane, *Amaterasu no tanjō* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1961); Okada Seishi, *Kodai ōken no saishi to shinwa* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1970), pp. 37–150; Matsumae Takeshi, *Kodai denshō to kyūtei saishi* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1974); Matsumae Takeshi, *Nihon no kamigami* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1974), pp. 90–182; Ueda Masaaki, *Nihon shinwa* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1960); Yoshii Iwao, *Tennō no keifu to shinwa*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1967 and 1976); Mizuno Seiichi, *Izumo shinwa* (Tokyo: Yagumo shobō, 1972); Torigoe Kenzaburō, *Izumo shinwa mo seiritsu* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1966); Matsumae Takeshi, *Nihon shinwa no keisei* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1970); Matsumae Takeshi, *Izumo shinwa* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976); Matsumae Takeshi, "The Origin and Growth of the Worship of Amaterasu," *Asian Folklore Studies* 38 (1978): 1–11; Matsumae Takeshi, *Yamato kokka to shinwa denshō* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1986); Saigō Nobutsuna, *Kojiki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1975); Tanaka Hatsuo, *Senso Daijōsai* (Tokyo: Mokujisha, 1975); Fukuyama Toshio, *Nihon kenchiku shi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Bokusui shobō, 1968); Fukuyama Toshio, *Nihon no yashiro* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1962). Also see Yasutada Watanabe, *Shintō Art: Ise and Izumo Shrines*, trans. Robert Ricketts (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1974); Inagaki Eizō, *Kodai no jinja kenchiku* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1973); Kageyama Haruki, *The Arts of Shintō*, trans. Christine Guth (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1973); and Ōba Iwao, *Saishi iseki: Shintō kōkogaku no kisoteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1970). For detailed studies, see Ōba Iwao, ed., *Shintō kōkogaku ronkō*, 6 vols. (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1971); Nishida Nagao, *Nishida Nagao zenshū*, 10 vols. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978–79).

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I shall use the results of this many-faceted and rapidly progressing research.

THE EVOLUTION OF SHINTO

Using these four periods as a chronological framework, I propose to trace the evolution of Shinto from its origins in the magical rites of preagricultural times to the establishment of a systematic religion supporting the centralized state.

Period 1: Genesis and early forms

Scholars have advanced a variety of theories to explain how the concept of kami originated and developed. The most likely explanation places the roots of kami worship in animistic forms of nature worship. Evidence for this view can be found in both ancient texts and present-day customs in which traces of primitive beliefs still linger. The eighth-century chronicle *Nihon shoki* depicts a world full of demons and animistic spirits: "In that land there were many kami that shone with a luster like that of fireflies, and evil kami that buzzed like flies. There were also trees and herbs that could speak."[20] In some rural areas even today, elderly villagers face the rising sun each morning, clap their hands together, and hail the appearance of the sun over the peaks of the nearby mountains as "the coming of the kami." Another example, which combines animistic Shinto with Buddhism, is the welcoming of the full moon with ritual chanting of Amida Buddha's name; the moon is called *nonosan* or *attosan*, words used to refer to either kami or Buddhas.

Some scholars maintain that the origin of Shinto lies in cults that venerated heroes or worshiped ancestors, that kami were originally human beings. Indeed, one aspect of Shinto as it developed in later ages was the veneration of historical and legendary figures, or ancestors of powerful families and clans. But as I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, elements of hero and ancestor worship were added at a later time. In the late Nara and early Heian periods, it was common to deify dead humans and to revere them at shrines, especially if people feared vengeance from their spirits for some political injustice. But in the earliest stages of the development of Shinto, kami were worshiped

20 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.134–5, Aston, 1.64.

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at shrines and humans were buried in graves. The two were strictly kept separate.

Finally, Shinto was not an entirely indigenous development. The Shinto view of the cosmos, for example, is a complex and not wholly integrated view that contains influences from various parts of Asia and even Oceania. In this worldview, the physical universe is divided into five parts, each governed by the appropriate kami. First, there is the High Plain of Heaven (Takamanohara) where many of the most important kami reside. Earth is the second part, and beneath the earth lies the kingdom of the dead and of evil spirits (Yomi no Kuni). The oceans make up the fourth part, called Watatsūmi no Kuni, the domain of all kinds of creatures, from ordinary fish to dragon kings. Somewhere across the sea lies the fifth part: Tokoyo no Kuni, a utopian land whose denizens neither age nor die.

The division of the cosmos into three parallel levels also appears in the shamanistic beliefs of northern Asia, for example, in Siberia, Mongolia, and the Altaic regions. Tales of a "dragon king's palace" at the bottom of the ocean can be found in the folklore of south Korea, the south central regions of China, and southeast Asia and India, and myths in China, south Korea, the Ryūkyū Islands, southeast Asia, Indonesia, and Polynesia speak of a utopian land in the middle of the sea. Thus elements of continental and island Asian culture were projected onto aboriginal beliefs to form the nascent Shinto religious system.

The search for Shinto's beginnings leads us to the prehistoric Jōmon and Yayoi periods. Though there is considerable discontinuity between the beliefs of these early periods and later ones, certain primitive strains were preserved in later religious practices. Our understanding of this prehistoric era is based primarily on archaeological evidence. The difficulty of interpreting such evidence makes it difficult, however, to reach a firm understanding of prehistoric rituals, myths, or concepts of the cosmos and divinity. But archaeologists have uncovered many artifacts that seem to have been used for religious purposes in very early times. For a somewhat later time, fragmentary historical evidence appears in Chinese chronicles, amplifying and clarifying the archaeological data.

The neolithic Jōmon culture was supported by hunting, fishing, and gathering and later by primitive forms of agriculture. The succeeding Yayoi culture, on the other hand, was an agrarian culture in which bronze and iron implements were used and rice was grown as a staple food. It is likely that religious practices during these periods reflected,

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in part, the methods that people used to make their living. Jōmon culture artifacts suggest that people of those days carried out magical–religious rites to guarantee the fertility of human beings as well as the fertility of the animals they hunted and the plants they gathered. After primitive forms of agriculture were introduced, probably from abroad, some of these rites took on an agrarian nature.

Perhaps the most striking of Jōmon artifacts are the *dogū*, human figurines that nearly all represent women whose exaggerated breasts and distended bellies indicate pregnancy. Some were even shown with a child protruding from the womb. Many have been unearthed near residential sites, and their placement within stone enclosures or on top of stone piles suggests that they were deliberately set apart, perhaps as objects of worship. This has led scholars such as Kokubu Naoichi to believe that the figurines were maimed, buried, and exhumed in magical rites that symbolized death and resurrection.[21] Many archaeologists have surmised that the *dogū* represent female deities who managed the procreation of the earth and of human beings. The folklorist Hotta Yoshio identified primitive forms of the worship of fertility-mother deities called *yama no kami* (mountain kami) in hunters' and woodcutters' rituals that linger in the folk beliefs of northeastern Japan. Hotta suggests that the figure of the *yama no kami* in present-day folk beliefs originated from the prehistoric fertility goddesses represented by *dogū*.[22] Other Jōmon artifacts, probably used in fertility rites, are stone rods shaped like the male phallus. These rods have been found in the centers or corners of rooms at the sites of Jōmon period houses and seem to have been objects of worship.

The functions of other items from the Jōmon period are somewhat more difficult to identify. Pottery is often decorated with images of serpents, and in later times, at least, serpents were believed to be the spirit of the water that was necessary for cultivation. Other artifacts that may have been used in some form of magical–religious ritual were clay and stone masks, and wooden plaques incised with human forms or carved in the shape of human faces.

Some of the archaeological evidence from the middle of this period demonstrates the transmission of elements from south Asian, southeast Asian, and south Pacific island cultures. Jōmon initiation rites that involved ritual tooth extraction and the custom of tattooing – apparent in the design of the *dogū* – were also practiced by southern peoples. In

21 Kokubu Naoichi, ed., *Daichi to jujutsu* (Tokyo: Gakushū kenkyūsha, 1969), p. 135.
22 Hotta Yoshio, *Yama no kami shinkō no kenkyū* (Nagoya: Ise minzoku gakkai, 1966), pp. 356 ff.

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addition, it seems that the cultivation of taro root was introduced from these areas.[23]

The importation of taro root cultivation may have given rise to the belief in a "guest" kami or spirit (*marebito*), who was given credit for introducing this early form of agriculture. In prehistoric times, according to Orikuchi Shinobu, each village probably conducted yearly rites on a set day to welcome the guest kami from Tokoyo no Kuni, the utopian land of boundless fertility across the sea. As a gift, the guest kami would bring a bountiful harvest, and he was also responsible for introducing and conducting coming-of-age ceremonies. Orikuchi finds evidence for his hypothesis in literary works of later times such as the *Kojiki* and the *Man'yōshū*, in extant New Year customs in the Tōhoku region of Honshu, and in Okinawan harvest festivals hailing a visitor deity.[24] Oka Masao points out the resemblance of these rites to those practiced in Melanesia, New Guinea, and elsewhere in the south Pacific.[25] The masks unearthed from Middle Jōmon sites might have been used by people who assumed the guest's role at festival times. In sum, the religious practices of the Jōmon period probably involved fertility rites that acquired agrarian elements, many from other Asian and Pacific cultures, when cultivation was introduced.

Thanks to accounts written by Chinese visitors to Japan, we understand the religion of the Yayoi culture somewhat more clearly than we do that of the Jōmon. Still, the evidence is fragmentary and often requires some ingenuity to interpret. But it seems that the basic elements of Yayoi religion included shamanism that used oracle bone divination and other methods to guide the course of secular government, and the worship of a "rice spirit" that accompanied the introduction of wet-rice cultivation.

The Yayoi culture differs from the Jōmon in its reliance on rice as a staple food. Yayoi religion reflects the importance of wet-rice agriculture. Harvest festivals described in literary sources and surviving rice-

23 Kanaseki Takeo, *Ryūkyū minzokushi* (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 1978), pp. 66–151; Kokubu Naoichi, *Nihon minzoku bunka no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Keiyūsha, 1970), pp. 16–120. These two scholars maintain that the taro cultivation of the later Jōmon period was brought from the south Pacific islands through the Philippine and the Ryūkyū islands and then to Japan. But Sasaki Kōmei argues in *Inasaku izen* (Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppankyoku, 1971) that the original home of taro cultivation was southeast Asia. Ezaki Teruya and Fujimori Eiichi maintain that primitive agriculture was practiced in the later Jōmon period; see Esaka Teruya, *Nihon bunka no kigen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1967), and Fujimori Eiichi, *Jōmon nōkō* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1970).

24 Orikuchi Shinobu, *Kodai kenkyū*, vols. 1–3 of *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1954).

25 Oka Masao, "Ijin sonota," in Yanagawa Keiichi and Tsuboi Hirobumi, eds., *Nihon saishi kenkyū shūsei* (Tokyo: Meicho shuppan, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 23–52.

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cultivation customs resemble those of southeast Asia and Indonesia,[26] indicating that wet-rice agriculture may have been introduced from southern regions. The important element in these festivals is the veneration of the rice spirit, believed to dwell at harvest time in specially reaped sheaves of rice. These sheaves were enshrined in a grain storehouse. The ritual prayers (*norito*) that hint at primitive agrarian beliefs identify the food kami Toyouke as the spirit of the rice. Another name for her is Ukanomitama, a name that can be translated literally as "food spirit."

Veneration of the rice spirit was an important element in the development of Shinto. Shinto's indebtedness to Yayoi period agrarian ritual is disclosed in the construction of shrine buildings at such early shrines as the Ise Great Shrine, which consists of two main sanctuaries: one for the worship of the Sun Goddess and another for the worship of the food kami Toyouke. The main hall of both Ise sanctuaries is built with a raised floor, ornamental roof crossbeams, and other architectural details that historians believe typify grain storehouse construction.[27] Such structures were probably used in the Yayoi period: an image of one is cast in relief on a Yayoi period ceremonial bronze bell that was found on the island of Shikoku.

Mythology underlines the religious importance attached to agriculture by placing the origin of cultivation in the age of the kami. In the *Kojiki* version of one such myth, the Sun Goddess's renegade brother Susa no O murders a food kami, Ōgetsuhime, and from her body sprout five staple crops: rice, barley, millet, soybeans, and red beans.[28] The *Nihon shoki* version of this tale names another food kami, Ukemochi, as the murder victim and the moon kami Tsukuyomi as the killer. From Ukemochi's body come not only grains and beans but also silkworms, cattle, and horses.[29] The German scholar Adolf Jensen classified this myth as a "Hainuwele" myth that is similar to tales told in the Solomon Islands, in which taro root sprouts from the corpse of a slain maiden named Hainuwele. Myths of this type, according to Jensen, explain the origins of primitive agriculture.[30] Similar tales have

26 Uno Enkū, *Maraishia ni okeru tōmai girei* (Tokyo: Tōyō bunko, 1944), pp. 670–85; Iwata Keiji, *Kami no tanjō: genshi shūkyō* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1960), pp. 198–266.

27 See Fukuyama, *Nihon no yashiro;* Watanabe, *Shintō Art,* pp. 32, 104–21; Gina Lee Barnes, *Prehistoric Yamato: Archaeology of the First Japanese State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies and Museum of Anthropology, 1988).

28 *Kojiki,* bk. 1, NKBT 1.84–85; Philippi, *Kojiki,* p. 87.

29 *Nihon shoki,* bk. 1, NKBT 67.102–3, Aston, 1.32–33.

30 Adolf Ellegard Jensen, *Myth and Cult Among Primitive Peoples,* trans. Marianna Tax Choldin and Wolfgang Weissleder (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 107–12, 121–2, 166–8, and *passim.*

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been told around the world, and Ōbayashi Taryō identified the Japanese version as a product of the slash-and-burn cultivation of millet practiced in south China.[31]

One artifact characteristic of the Yayoi period is the *dōtaku*, or bronze bell. These bells are found mainly in western Honshu and in the Tōkai District. Though *dōtaku* were undoubtedly employed in religious ritual, we do not know whether they were used by the chieftains of small principalities or by villages in public community festivals. The *dōtaku* were buried on hillsides near agricultural plains. Perhaps they were temporarily stored underground between religious festivals. Inscriptions on the *dōtaku* depict flowing water, waterfowl, fish, boats, and objects related to agriculture, and these have led some scholars to conclude that the bells were used in agricultural festivals and rites to pray for rain.[32] It seems likely that they were also connected with hunting and fishing rites. Bronze weapons such as swords, spears, and halberds were buried much in the same manner as the *dōtaku* were. Their distribution was centered in northern Kyushu, but their ritual significance is not clear.

A hierarchical social structure, the formation of small kingdoms in certain regions, and the shamanic nature of the religion and government in at least one region of Japan are documented in the Chinese chronicle *Wei chih*, compiled in the third century. According to a report by contemporary Chinese envoys who visited Japan, the small kingdom of Yamatai – whose exact location is still the subject of much scholarly debate – was ruled by a woman named Himiko.

> [Himiko] occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people. Though mature in age, she remained unmarried. She had a younger brother who assisted her in ruling the country. After she became the ruler, there were few who saw her. She had one thousand women as attendants, but only one man. He served her food and drink and acted as a medium of communication. She resided in a palace surrounded by towers and stockades, and her armed guards were in a state of constant vigilance.

The text also indicates that political actions were guided by a divination method in which heat was applied to a deer's scapula and answers to questions were deduced from the length and shape of the fissures

31 Ōbayashi Taryō, *Inasaku no shinwa* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1973), pp. 23–103.

32 Fujimori Eiichi, *Dōtaku* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1964), pp. 236–56; Mishina Shōei, "Dōtaku shōkō," *Kodai saisei to kokurei shinkō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), pp. 11–28. For pictures of these bells, see Namio Egami, *The Beginnings of Japanese Art* (Tokyo and New York: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1973), pp. 138–40.

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that resulted.[33] Such practices are found all over north Asia, perhaps the best-known case being that of Shang dynasty China. Some scholars have pointed to the parallels between Himiko and female shamans active in more recent times in Okinawa. Like Himiko, the Okinawa shamans dealt with religious affairs, whereas their brothers handled secular affairs.

Though it is clear that Himiko was a shaman, we know little about her religious duties. Possibly they involved some form of sun worship, as the name Himiko suggests a child or priestess of the sun. Furthermore, the *Wei chih* depicts Himiko's people as "water people" who "were fond of diving into the water to get fish and shells" and "decorated their bodies in order to keep away large fish and waterfowl."[34] It seems likely that these fishermen and divers were related to south Chinese or southeast Asian seafarers who worshiped the sun.

Shamanism and divination by oracles formed a part of later Shinto, and rites to ensure agricultural prosperity continued as one of Shinto's most basic elements. All these were Yayoi period contributions to the development of Shinto. But the name "Shinto" cannot be given properly to either the Yayoi or, of course, the earlier Jōmon beliefs and practices. Certain features characteristic of Shinto – definite places of worship that later developed into permanent buildings, or *shintai* (kami body), the sacred objects in which the kami were thought to lodge – simply did not exist during these times. More important, perhaps, is the fact that Yayoi period artifacts are rarely found at sites of ancient shrines established in later periods.[35] This suggests a discontinuity between Yayoi period religious practices and those of the succeeding Burial Mound period.

Period 2: From primitive Shinto to clan Shinto

In the Burial Mound period (roughly A.D. 250 to 600), primitive forms of shrine Shinto began to develop hand in hand with an evolving political system. Animistic spirits were given specific names and functions, and a permanent sacred space was set aside to worship them.

33 *Wei chih* 30.25b–31a, trans. Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (South Pasadena, Calif.: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), p. 13.

34 Ibid., p. 10.

35 A few exceptions can be found. For example, fragments of a Yayoi period *dōtaku* or bronze bell have been discovered underneath the sacred rock at the Kamikura Shrine in Shingū, Wakayama Prefecture. And a bronze sword, also dating from the Yayoi period, has been unearthed in the precincts of the Izumo Grand Shrine.

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Later on in the period, certain kami took on political functions as the tutelary kami of powerful clans (*ujigami*).

Archaeological evidence is still crucial to our understanding of this period. The fact that Burial Mound period artifacts have been unearthed in the precincts of present-day shrines indicates that later shrine Shinto developed directly out of this period's beliefs and practices. Another form of evidence that we can now use with increasing efficacy is that of mythology. In particular, the myths recorded in eighth-century chronicles and gazetteers supply us with many tales about the adoption of tutelary kami by powerful clans.

In the early part of this period, kami were regarded largely as spirits of nature who resided in and controlled various topographical features. The concept of sacred space had begun to develop, and kami were thought to take lodging in readily identifiable locations. Some of these lodgings were completely natural, such as great rocks (*iwakura*) or giant trees (*himorogi*). Other locations were determined by people who set rocks in a certain pattern (*iwasaka*) or made arrangements of cut trees (also called *himorogi*). Kami were sometimes thought to descend to such places temporarily at festival time and sometimes to live there permanently. People would mark off these places of worship with sacred rope (*shimenawa*) and decorate them with mirrors, swords, beads, and lengths of cloth. Not until a later time were sacred objects regarded as the *shintai* in which kami were believed to reside. There were no permanent shrine buildings in these early days.

The utilization of natural features as sacred space can be found in certain present-day shrine practices. Ōmiwa Shrine in Nara Prefecture, for example, has no main hall to house the emblem of its kami. In place of the main hall is the holy Mt. Miwa itself, which rises behind the ritual hall and where prayers to the kami are offered. Sacred rocks found on the mountain's summit are believed to be the seat of the kami. Suwa Shrine in Nagano Prefecture also takes a holy mountain as its main hall, and similar practices once characterized Isonokami Shrine in Nara Prefecture and Munakata Shrine in Fukuoka Prefecture.

By the Burial Mound period, people had begun to differentiate and rank the kami according to their functions. The most important kami were those of the sun and the moon and those given responsibility for creation. Ranked below them were kami of the fields, mountains, streams, and such and those related directly to people's daily lives, such as kami of the hearth, fire, agriculture, or fishing. These kami

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were venerated at communal rites. They were not yet anthropomorphized, nor were they organized into a hierarchical pantheon, and early myths regarding these kami lack the political elements common to myths of later times.

From at least the time of Himiko, religious belief had influenced the conduct of secular government, and religious authority was used to sanction the seizure and maintenance of temporal power. At the beginning of the Burial Mound period, certain powerful clans began to assume control over specific territories, and it seems that they found it necessary to claim the religious authority attached to the worship of their regions' important kami. In particular, they embraced such kami as the *kunitama* (province soul) that protected a region's lands or the water kami that guaranteed the area abundant rain and harvest. Clan members claimed common ancestry, although many blood-tie claims were probably fictitious. A tutelary kami was sometimes adopted as the clan's ancestral kami. But judging from the names of kami listed in the *Engishiki*, this was not a common development.[36] For example, the Mononobe, Nakatomi, Izumo, and Munakata clans did not consider their tutelary kami to be their ancestral kami.

Yanagita Kunio, the dean of Japanese folklore scholars, sought the origin of shrines and the concept of kami in the deification of dead ancestors. According to Japanese folk beliefs, a soul loses its individual character either thirty-three or fifty years after death and thereupon becomes a beneficent kami. Yanagita maintained that these kami were thought to watch over and help their descendants. In the winter, the kami would remain quietly in the mountains but would descend to the plains every spring to guard the ripening grain in their descendants' fields. After the autumn harvest they would return to the mountains. Thus the winter "kami of the mountain" became the spring "kami of the fields." In the second or fourth month of the old calendar, festivals welcomed these kami, which were sent off again in the eleventh month. Such rites are conducted even today.

Yanagita pointed out that at many ancient shrines, there are two places of worship, one at the mountaintop and another in the village at the foot of the mountain that housed the kami from the planting season through harvest time. He argued that the mountain sanctuaries that enshrine the tutelary kami of two Ise priest families, the Arakida and the Watarai, were once actually the graves of these families' ances-

36 Ôta Ryô, *Zentei Nihon jôdai shakai soshiki no kenkyû* (Tokyo: Kunimitsu shobô, 1955), pp. 297–313; Harada Toshiaki, *Jinja* (Tokyo: Shibundô, 1961), pp. 15–24, 107–10.

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tors, and he concluded that this was the original function of mountain sanctuaries in general.[37]

Many folklore scholars today support Yanagita's hypothesis, but I believe that there is much evidence to the contrary. Even when a shrine consists of two separate places of worship, one on the mountaintop and another at the foot, the kami enshrined at the mountain sanctuary is not necessarily anyone's ancestor. Kami of the sun and the moon or the mountain itself are often the objects of worship. In fact, most of the examples that Yanagita cites as *yama miya*, or mountain sanctuaries, are shrines to nature deities such as the mountain kami of Hie Shrine in Shiga Prefecture and the female kami of Mt. Fuji in Shizuoka Prefecture. Nor is it common to find graves, on mountains or elsewhere, that are believed to be the *shintai* where the kami reside. The shrines listed in the Register of Kami in the *Engishiki*, moreover, are dedicated to nature kami such as Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess), Tsukuyomi (the moon kami), or Watatsumi (the kami of the sea). On the other hand, historical emperors, empresses, or princesses were buried in graves away from the shrine precincts.[38] Sometimes, of course, historical or legendary figures such as King Ōjin or his mother, Queen Jingū, were enshrined as kami, but this practice dates from the Nara period rather than from the period of primitive Shinto.

The mountains, moreover, are not the only route by which kami enter the world of human beings. The sea may be used as well. In some festivals held at oceanside shrines, a boat containing a kami's *shintai* or its substitute is set afloat on the water. For example, in the spring festival of Miho Shrine in Shimane Prefecture, two sacred boats decorated with *sakaki* leaves float on the sea and approach the shore. On board each boat a man and a woman – who have undergone purification rites – sit as substitutes for the kami. When they arrive, they disembark and enter the shrine. It appears that rituals such as this originally represented the welcoming of the kami from across the sea.[39] In other coastal villages, it is believed that the kami came from across the sea in the form of a stone, and the stone was later enshrined. At festival times a *mikoshi* (the sacred portable carriage that houses the *shintai*), sometimes containing this stone, is brought to the place where it was originally discov-

37 Yanagita Kunio, "Yama miya ko," in *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1963), vol. 11, pp. 295–358; Yanagita Kunio, "Senzo no hanashi," in *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, 10.114–52.

38 The Register of Kami comprises Books 9 and 10 of the *Engishiki*, KT 26.179–320; Bock, *Engi-shiki*, 2.113–71.

39 Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Matsuri fudoki* (Tokyo: Shakai shisōsha, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 167–70.

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ered.[40] Such kami certainly resemble the ancient *marebito,* the guest kami who was believed to visit villages, bearing the harvest of rice and other crops. These kami were undoubtedly fertility deities and were naturally honored in important agricultural seasons, in spring when the rice was planted or in the fall when the crops were harvested.

Both the mountains and the seas can be regarded as entrances to the human world. Kami were thought to descend to mountains from the heavens, and mountains were sometimes referred to as "ladders." At the Kamo and Fushimi Inari shrines in Kyoto, kami are further assisted down to earth by a branch from a sacred tree. The tradition of the kami's descent from mountain to earth by branches probably has a north Asian lineage, and that of the kami's arrival from a distant shore probably has a southern lineage.[41] In later years the two traditions became mixed. In any case, the resemblance between oceanside festivals and harvest festivals that welcome a guest kami suggest that these deities were thought of as travelers to the human world and should be classified as nature deities, not ancestral spirits.

Nevertheless, some tutelary kami are believed to be blood ancestors of their clans. Does this support Yanagita's theory? It appears that even in these cases, clans adopted kami that were already worshiped as nature spirits. As George Sansom pointed out, "Making your god into an ancestor and making your ancestor into a god are not the same thing."[42] The process by which one such kami became a clan ancestor is reflected in a *Kojiki* myth that should be examined closely.

The myth concerns the ancestor and founder of the Miwa clan, prominent among clans based near Mt. Miwa in the early years of the Burial Mound period. The myth begins with Ōmono Nushi, the rain kami of Mt. Miwa, coming nightly to the home of a daughter of the chief of an occupational group (*be*) that manufactured pottery. The daughter never really saw what her lover looked like and did not know that he was a kami. But her curiosity understandably became quite strong when she became pregnant. So one morning she attached a thread to her lover's clothing and followed him. When she found him at the Miwa Shrine, she realized that he was Ōmono Nushi appearing in the form of a serpent. Later she gave birth to a son, a kami–human ancestor of the Miwa clan.

40 Manabu Ogura, "Drifted Deities in the Noto Peninsula," in Dorson, ed., *Studies in Japanese Folklore,* pp. 133–44.

41 Oka et al., *Nihon minzoku no kigen,* pp. 60–62.

42 George B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 54.

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Some generations later, Japan was stricken by a plague. The ruler dreamed that Ōmono Nushi appeared, declaring that the plague would be eradicated if he were appropriately worshiped at court. Discovering that Ōmono Nushi had produced a human son, the ruler summoned the son and placed him in charge of rites to venerate the serpent kami.[43]

Archaeological evidence, and that of comparative mythology, support the conclusion that this tale has a historical basis. Myths from Manchuria and Korea tell of a woman who followed her lover by attaching a thread to his clothing. In the middle of the fifth century, moreover, potters migrated from Korea to Kawachi Province (not far from Mt. Miwa) where archaeologists have found the remains of unglazed ceramic ware called *sueki*.[44] Examples of this pottery, dating from the sixth or seventh century, have been found at the foot of Mt. Miwa in Yamato Province (Nara Prefecture). The potters had no doubt moved to Yamato, carrying their legend along with their artisans' techniques. Later, when the Miwa clan decided to claim religious authority that stemmed from monopolizing the worship of the Mt. Miwa rain kami, they must have been influenced by old Korean myths in selecting a human descendant of their kami as the clan's founding ancestor.[45]

This sort of myth is not uncommon, as it appears elsewhere in Japan and in other parts of the world. Such tales also are sometimes found in medieval sources. For example, a legend regarding the ancestry of the hero Ogata Saburō appears in the medieval war epic *Heike monogatari*. This legend, which resembles the Miwa tale, tells of a young woman in Bungo Province (Ōita Prefecture in Kyushu) who had a mysterious lover. In order to find out what he looked like, the woman attached a needle and thread to his clothing and followed the thread to his dwelling place, a cave on the mountain Ubagatake. There she saw her lover in his true form, that of a giant serpent, with a needle stuck in his neck. She and her servants fled in terror. Later, the woman gave birth to her lover's son who grew up to become the heroic founding father of the Ogata clan. Subsequent generations of the clan were said to have had the scales of a serpent's tail marked on their bodies, a sign of their serpent–kami ancestry.

43 *Kojiki*, bk. 2, NKBT 1.178–81, Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 201–2.

44 It was in later times, of course, that the tale was set in Sujin's reign.

45 Matsumae Takeshi, "Miwayama densetsu to Ōmiwa uji," *Sanpendō* 19 (1975): 1–11. Later this thesis was republished in Matsumae Takeshi, *Yamato kokka to shinwa denshō* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1986).

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Variant forms of this legend can be found in other Japanese sources. For example, there is the story, found in *Honchō jinja kō* (a collection of shrine legends compiled by Hayashi Razan, 1602–57), about a famous Confucian scholar of the Edo period. According to this version, set in Hyūga Province (Miyazaki Prefecture), the young woman found her lover dead, poisoned by the iron of a needle. In other important details, however, the version agrees with the one that appears in the *Heike monogatari*.[46]

Such myths do not represent the deification of actual clan ancestors, as it is clear that the kami had been venerated before the clan claimed to be his descendants. A clan that honored a nature kami might eventually designate one ancestor as the clan's founding hero and claim that he was descended from the worshiped kami. Myths told about the hero's conception might follow the Miwa pattern: the visit of a kami to a young woman, her impregnation, the birth of the hero child, and, later, the designation of the hero's descendants as priests charged with worshiping the kami. Such myths explained the origins of particular lineages and occupational groups, affirmed the power of the clan chieftains, and justified the clan's monopoly of a sacred authority derived from the priestly role of clan chieftains.

Another interesting feature of the Miwa legend is that the kami takes an animal form. There are many examples of this in Japanese mythology: The hero Yamato Takeru no Mikoto encountered a kami in the form of a white boar (or, in some versions, a serpent), and Jimmu was challenged at Mt. Kumano by an evil kami in the form of a bear. Watatsumi, kami of the sea, appears as a dragon or *wani* (sometimes translated as crocodile and sometimes as shark).[47]

The serpent form is particularly common. Ōmono Nushi appears as a serpent in several *Nihon shoki* episodes; in one, he takes the shape of a small snake and hides himself in a princess's comb box.[48] The serpent was once regarded as the spirit of the water and rain, perhaps

46 *Heike monogatari*, NKBT 33.130–1, translated by Helen Craig McCullough in *The Tale of Heike* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Hayashi Razan, *Honchō jinja kō*, vol. 7 of *Dai Nihon fūkyō sōsho* (Tokyo: Dai Nihon fūkyō sōsho kankōkai, 1920), pp. 38–39. Also see Seki Keigo, *Mukashi banashi to warai banashi* (Tokyo: Iwasaki bijutsusha, 1960), pp. 67–108; Takagi Toshio, *Zōtei Nihon shinwa densetsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 216–26; Torii, *Yūshi izen no Nippon*, pp. 428–54.

47 Toyotama Hime, Watatsumi's daughter, appears as a *wani* in myths recorded in the chronicles. See *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.144–5, Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 157; and *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.167, Aston, 1.95. The Yamato Takeru tale appears in the *Kojiki*, bk. 2, NKBT 1.218–19, Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 246–7, and *Nihon shoki*, bk. 7, NKBT 67.308–9, Aston, 1.208–9. The tale about Emperor Jimmu appears in the *Kojiki*, bk. 2, NKBT 1.150–3, Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 167–8.

48 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 5, NKBT 67.246–7, Aston, 1.158–9.

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because its form resembles the jagged shape of the lightning bolt that accompanies summer storms. Whatever the reason, the veneration of the serpent as the rain (or thunder and lightning) deity appears not only in Japan but also in China, Korea, southeast Asia, and India.

Other myths tell of the marriage of a female kami and a human prince. In one tale, a prince weds the maiden Toyotama Hime, whose true form is that of a dragon or, in some versions, a *wani*.[49] Orikuchi Shinobu, Matsumura Takeo, and others take such myths as evidence for totemic practices among the ancient Japanese.[50] But I maintain that these tales, like the tales of the marriage of women and serpents, are water-related myths with parallels in Korea, China, southeast Asia, and India, as well as the Middle East and Europe.

The Japanese belief that kami take animal shape is not a form of totemism. In primitive totemism, a particular animal species is related to a certain clan; both are believed to have a common ancestor, and their proliferation is thought to be interrelated. Thus the clan frequently conducts magic rites to ensure the species' fertility, and clan members distinguish themselves by wearing the animal's crest. Such elements simply did not exist in the Japanese veneration of animal kami. The Miwa clan, for instance, venerated one particular mythological serpent, but serpents as a species were not especially honored. The adoption of one specific serpent as an ancestor points to the conscious embrace of the sacred (hence secular) authority that became attached to the worship of an already important kami.

In short, the early Burial Mound period was one in which Shinto took on the basic forms that characterize it today. Nature kami were named, and their functions and places of operation were delineated. Clans adopted kami as tutelary deities, sometimes claimed them as ancestors, and monopolized their worship. The connection between sacred and secular authority was further strengthened, and the stage was set for sanctioning the positions and actions of the Yamato nobility through religious means.

Period 3: From clan Shinto to state Shinto

In the sixth and seventh centuries, the Yamato court gradually deprived powerful provincial clans of their temporal power and magical–

49 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.135–45, Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 150–8; *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.164–85, Aston, 1.93–108.

50 Orikuchi Shinobu, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū*, vol. 2 of *Kodai kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha 1955), pp. 269–309; Matsumura Takeo, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Baifūkan, 1955), vol. 3, pp. 761–800.

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religious authority. The clans themselves formed a court nobility loyal to the imperial clan, and their traditions were adopted by the imperial line and used to enhance the emperor's authority. A solar kami, Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess), was adopted as the imperial ancestor and promoted to the highest seat in the kami pantheon. Thus we see the beginnings of the organization and systemization of Shinto on a nationwide scale.

The available written evidence, though increasingly contemporary, must be interpreted carefully in the light of its obvious political bias. To aid in evaluating the chronicles and other documents compiled under imperial auspices, we should examine not only the archaeological evidence but also local traditions, myths, and shrine ceremonies that retain traces of the past.

The Yamato court's assumption of supreme religious authority was a gradual process, involving the appropriation of local ceremonies, myths, sacred treasures, and kami. Parallels between the rites and myths of Yamato and other provinces demonstrate this process. To begin with, powerful local clans strengthened the connections between their sacred and secular functions. Those who had assumed religious authority by monopolizing the worship of important kami came to regard certain of their predecessors as kami also. Such individuals combined secular with religious authority in a sort of "sacred kingship," affirmed by the possession of regalia and the periodic repetition of ritual. Some of these rituals are conducted even today, although priests lost their temporal power more than a millennium ago.

One example is the ceremony that confirms the accession of an individual to the post of *kuni no miyatsuko* (provincial governor) of Izumo, an office that once exercised territorial power over Izumo Province (Shimane Prefecture) as well as priestly functions at the Izumo Grand Shrine. According to tradition, the initial occupant of this post was a kami who had descended from heaven to venerate Ōnamuchi at the Izumo Shrine. The kami's transmission of his authority to his "descendants" is confirmed in rites that sanctify each new occupant of the post as a kami incarnate. The new priest communes with his "ancestor" kami by sharing with him a meal cooked by a fire made by rubbing sacred sticks and boards together, and in water drawn from a sanctified well. Similar rites were also conducted yearly, perhaps symbolizing the renewal of the governor's authority and the rejuvenation of the cosmos and the earth.[51] Most

51 Senge Takamune, *Izumo taisha* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1968), pp. 211–12.

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other provincial clans probably held such ceremonies in ancient times.

Similar rites were conducted at the imperial palace. At the Daijōsai festival following his enthronement, the emperor shared a communal meal with Amaterasu, his ancestral kami. Like the governor of Izumo, the emperor also participated in similar rites, held yearly, that were meant to renew his sacred power. In these rites, performed during the Niinamesai (harvest festival) at the imperial palace, the emperor partook of newly harvested rice believed to house the rice spirit.[52]

Like the emperor and the provincial governor of Izumo, provincial priest-rulers were once regarded as incarnations of kami. According to medieval records of the Suwa Shrine in Shinano Province (Nagano Prefecture), the high priest assumed office in a rite called "the enthronement ceremony." In this rite, the priest occupied a rock beneath a holly tree and held three sacred symbols. It was believed that through this rite, the priest became the incarnation of the kami worshiped at the shrine.[53] At festival time at both Izumo and Suwa, the priests sat in the kami's seat and were venerated by other priests and laypersons. Other shrines in Japan, such as the Munakata Shrine in Chikuzen Province (Fukuoka Prefecture) and the Aso Shrine in Higo Province (Kumamoto Prefecture) conducted similar rituals, which seem to date from a time when the provinces were governed by sanctified rulers.

One of the best-known myths in the chronicles is the tale of the marriage of the kami Izanagi and Izanami and how they gave birth to the islands of Japan. Izanagi is also depicted as the father of the Sun Goddess, the imperial ancestral kami. Emperors are thus linked with the kami that are said to have created the very land they ruled.[54]

Creation myths, however, were not limited to kami associated with the imperial clan. Like the Yamato rulers who became Japan's emperors, the clan chieftains – descendants of the sacred priest-rulers – were conscious of old traditions. A legend recorded in the *Izumo fudoki*, compiled in 733 by nobles of the Izumo clan, tells of the province's own creator kami, Yatsuka Mizu Omi Tsunu. This kami would travel to far-off places such as Silla in Korea and the Noto peninsula in north Honshu. When he saw a piece of land he favored, he would work his spade into it, haul it back to Izumo as if he were harpooning a fish, and attach it to the Izumo coast. This Izumo creation myth explains the

52 *Engishiki*, KT 26.172, Bock, *Engi-shiki*, 2.92.
53 Fujimori Eiichi, *Suwa taisha* (Tokyo: Chūōkōron bijutsu shuppan, 1965), pp. 15–18.
54 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.70–71, Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 70; *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.95, Aston, 1.27–28.

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many capes and inlets on the jagged coastline of the Shimane peninsula where the Izumo Grand Shrine is located.[55] Yet another creation myth, related in a poem in the eighth-century collection *Man'yōshū*, tells of the mountain-building activities of two important kami.[56]

The creator kami adopted as ancestor of the imperial clan was, in fact, once the kami worshiped by other people. The Izanagi creation myths were originally tales told by the fishermen of Awaji Island, where the worship of this kami originated. In fact, Izanagi appears as a fisherman's kami even in the *Nihon shoki*, which includes versions of myths other than those officially adopted by the court. In these tales, recorded in chapters on the reigns of the fifth-century kings Richū and Ingyō, Izanagi was simply the tutelary kami of Awaji Island, a kami worshiped by fishermen with offerings of pearls. He had no connection with the imperial clan.[57]

From the fourth century, however, Awaji was linked to the Yamato court. The island was responsible for supplying the court with table salt and other ocean products, and it was under the court's direct jurisdiction. In the reign of Ōjin, Awaji was a major holding of the Azumi clan that controlled the fishermen of all provinces and supplied the imperial dining table.[58] It was probably through such connections that the Izanagi–Izanami legends were spread throughout Japan and introduced to the court.

The imperial clan claimed descent from Izanagi and the Sun Goddess through the latter's grandson, dispatched to earth from Takamanohara. Other clans told similar myths about their kami ancestors. The *Kuji hongi*, an early Heian period text that records the traditions of the Mononobe clan, tells how the clan's ancestral kami Nigihayahi descended from heaven in a boat made of stone. He carried with him ten kinds of sacred treasures, including two mirrors, a sword, jewels (that bestowed life, brought perfect health, resurrected the dead, and drove off evil spirits), and a scarf that repelled harmful insects. Attended by other kami, Nigihayahi landed on Mt. Ikaruga in Kawachi Province.[59] This tale – too well known, perhaps, to be suppressed, despite its obvious parallels with the imperial ancestor's descent – also appears in an abbreviated form in the *Nihon shoki*.[60] Other clans also claimed descent from kami who had come from heaven in a similar

55 *Izumo fudoki*, NKBT 2.99–103, Aoki, *Izumo fudoki*, pp. 81–83.
56 *Man'yōshū*, vol. 2, NKBT 5.232–3, trans. H. H. Honda, *The Manyōshū: A New and Complete Translation* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō, 1967), p. 104.
57 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 13, NKBT 67.426–7, 446–8; Aston, 1.307, 322–3.
58 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 13, NKBT 67.364–5; Aston, 1.256. 59 *Kuji hongi*, KT 7.25.
60 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 3, NKBT 67.188–9; Aston, 1.110–11.

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fashion. The Izumo provincial governor's family was one of these clans. The *Shinsen shōjiroku*, a text compiled in 815 that lists the names and lineages of important clans, traces the ancestry of the head of the Yoshino Kuzu clan to a kami from Takamanohara.[61]

A myth recorded in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* tells how Ame no Hiboko, son of the king of Silla in Korea, sailed to Japan bearing magical jewels that calmed the winds and waves.[62] Ame no Hiboko appears in the chronicles as a human being, but the *Harima fudoki* identifies him as a kami from Silla who challenged the powerful kami Ōnamuchi.[63] Ame no Hiboko was probably venerated by Korean immigrants. Moreover, myths about the descent of kami from heaven were sometimes set in Korea rather than in Japan. In an extant fragment of the *Chikuzen fudoki*, for instance, a powerful northern Kyushu family claimed as its ancestor a kami named Hiboko (identified by some scholars as Ame no Hiboko) who had descended to a mountain peak in the northern Korean kingdom of Koguryŏ.[64] The sacred symbols that Ame no Hiboko bore parallel regalia traditionally carried by kami who came down from heaven, and they indicate that Ame no Hiboko – like the ancestor of the imperial clan and other important clans – was once seen as the descendant of a heavenly kami.

Perhaps the central element of state Shinto, as it developed later, was the veneration of Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess) as the imperial ancestor. By claiming descent from a kami who could be regarded as supreme, the imperial clan justified its seizure and maintenance of temporal power. Like many other elements in the mythological structure that affirmed imperial-clan power, sun worship was common throughout Japan. Indeed, the names of many kami refer to the sun. Ame no Hiboko, for instance, means Spear of the Heavenly Sun. In one *Kojiki* tale, his wife Akaruihime (Shining Princess) was originally a red, sunlike jewel who was transformed into a beautiful woman.[65] Other clans besides the imperial clan venerated a sun kami from whom they claimed descent. My recent research and that of others show that many kami worshiped at shrines listed in the *Engishiki* were kami of the sun, kami with names like Amateru (Heaven Shining) and Amateru Mitama (Heavenly Shining Sacred Spirit).[66]

61 *Shinsen shōjiroku, Gunsho ruijū*, 16.177.
62 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 6, NKBT 67.260–1; Aston, 1.168–9; *Kojiki*, bk. 2, NKBT 1.254–8; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 291–3.
63 *Harima fudoki*, NKBT 2.304–7. 64 *Chikuzen fudoki*, NKBT 2.503–4.
65 *Kojiki*, bk.2, NKBT 1.254–7; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 292–3.
66 These shrines are listed in the Register of Kami in Books 9 and 10 of the *Engishiki*, KT 26.179–320; Bock, *Engi-shiki*, 2.113–71.

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The festivals and traditions of Amateru Shrine on the island of Tsushima are colored by elements of sun worship. In the *Kuji hongi*, the Tsushima kami is called Amenohi Mitama (Heavenly Sun Spirit) and is claimed as an ancestor by the local powerholders, the Tsushima no Atae. The *Kuji hongi* relates that this kami descended from heaven along with Nigihayahi, ancestor of the Mononobe clan.[67] The legend of the Tsushima kami's descent was probably once an independent tradition but was later absorbed into the myths of the Mononobe clan, much as other provincial myths were absorbed into the imperial myth structure.

Another clan that worshiped a sun kami was the Owari. According to the chronicles, that clan's ancestor was a son or younger brother of the Sun Goddess's grandson, Hononinigi.[68] Once, perhaps, the Owari traced their descent back to Amateru Mitama (Heavenly Shining Sacred Spirit) or to Ama no Oshihi (Heavenly Great Sun). The sun kami venerated by the Ōtomo clan rode a stone boat down from heaven, according to the *Man'yōshū*;[69] in the chronicles, this kami becomes an attendant of Hononinigi.[70] A branch of the Ōtomo clan was called the Himatsuri (sun worshipers), and many of the clan's heroes in legends of subsequent generations had the character for "sun" in their names. Though the tales of the Owari and the Ōtomo clans were later subsumed into the imperial mythological structure, they probably once represented independent traditions.

The kami worshiped by the Izumo clan was also a sun kami. His name, Ame no Hohi, means Heavenly Grain Sun, and his sons are called Ame no Hinadori (Heavenly Sun Bird) and Takehi Nateru (Brave Sun Shining). Myths tell us that Ame no Hinadori descended from heaven bearing the sacred treasures that became the clan's regalia,[71] and initiated the Izumo fire festival (cited earlier in this chapter). Other items in the chronicles also mention Ame no Hohi but assign him a less-than-heroic role. According to tales in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, Ame no Hohi was sent to earth to prepare the way for Hononinigi's descent by securing the submission of Ōnamuchi, the powerful kami who ruled Izumo. Instead, however, Ame no Hohi

67 *Sendai kuji hongi*, KT 7.25–26.

68 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.124–7; Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 137. See Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 634–5, for a note on the ancestry of the Owari (Wopari) clan.

69 *Man'yōshū*, vol. 4, NKBT 7.372–3; Honda, *The Man'yōshū*, p. 321.

70 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.127–9; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 139–41; *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.156; Aston, 1.86.

71 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 5, NKBT 67.250–1; Aston, 1.162.

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surrendered to Ōnamuchi and failed to return to Takamanohara.[72] The Izumo myths provide us with another example of an independent tradition of sun worship and a kami who bore sacred treasures from heaven, myths and treasures that were then appropriated by the imperial clan.

We do not know for certain when the imperial clan decided to choose a sun kami as its ancestor, or why the Sun Goddess, worshiped at Ise, was chosen. It appears that Takamimusubi was originally the tutelary deity of the imperial clan, and many elements of the worship of Takamimusubi were retained in court ceremonials of later periods. He was considered responsible for the emperor's long life and prosperity, and he was one of the eight kami venerated in the Hasshinden, the palace chapel of the government's Council of Kami Affairs. Moreover, he also played an important role at the Chinkonsai (the annual winter festival held in order to rejuvenate the emperor's soul) and the Kinensai (the spring agricultural festival).

"Musubi," the final portion of Takamimusubi's name, means "the creating spirit." In other words, he was an agricultural kami. He was enshrined along with seven other kami in a temporary sanctuary near the sacred fields where rice was cultivated for the Daijōsai.

Amaterasu was not enshrined at the Hasshinden in the imperial court, although from the middle of the Heian period the emperor did venerate her elsewhere in the palace. Nor did she originally figure in the Daijōsai. Moreover, in the simplest and apparently oldest myth concerning the imperial ancestor Hononinigi, the grandfather Takamimusubi sends him to earth as a newborn baby, wrapped simply in a coverlet.[73] The story that later came to represent the founding of the imperial line originally seems to have told how Takamimusubi, the kami of productivity, sent to earth the rice kami, Hononinigi, whose name means "rich harvest of rice." The *Kojiki* version of the myth casts Hononinigi as the Sun Goddess's grandson and sends him to earth in grand fashion, accompanied by regalia and attendant kami.[74] These were undoubtedly embellishments added at a later time.

Oka Masao has argued that the parallel Takamimusubi and Amaterasu myths represent the contact and fusion of people of southeast Asian lineage (who worshiped Amaterasu) with north Asian Tungusic people who invaded Japan in the third and fourth centuries and

72 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.111–13; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 120–2; *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.134–5; Aston, 1.64.
73 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 2, NKBT 67.140; Aston, 1.70.
74 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.125–9; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 137–41.

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brought with them the worship of the heavenly kami Takamimusubi. According to Oka's theories, these north Asian people subjugated Japan's earlier agrarian inhabitants.[75] But I maintain that Amaterasu was originally a local sun kami consciously adopted by the imperial clan in an effort to enhance its power. The parallelism of the myths is based not on the amalgamation of two different racial cultures but on the linkage between the Yamato court and the Ise shrine.

It was probably fishermen and other seafaring people of Ise to the east of Yamato who originally worshiped the Sun Goddess and transmitted tales that later occupied positions of importance in the imperial mythology. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess) was first worshiped at the imperial palace, but in the reign of Sujin, her sacred mirror (her *shintai*) was enshrined in a Yamato village, and an imperial princess was appointed to conduct rites in her honor.[76] In the next reign, a more suitable place of worship was sought as an imperial princess traveled around the country with the mirror, finally reaching Ise. The Sun Goddess then expressed her wish to be enshrined at the place, which became the Inner Shrine at Ise.[77] The myth justifies the imperial adoption of the Ise sun kami as its ancestral kami by claiming that the Sun Goddess was originally worshiped at the palace and was later moved to Ise. Further, it justifies the custom, practiced since the early sixth century, of choosing in every reign an imperial princess to serve the Ise Shrine as a *saiō* or shaman. The legend itself was probably fabricated in the seventh century or even later.[78]

Amaterasu may have been adopted as the imperial ancestor in the following way: In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Yamato court maintained extensive political, military, and diplomatic contacts with the kingdoms of Korea. Sun worship was common in the Korean kingdoms, and royal founding ancestors were frequently named as children of the sun.[79] In order to deal with these kings on an equal

75 *Nihon minzoku no kigen*, pp. 60–62, 87–89.

76 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 5, NKBT 67.238–9; Aston, 1.151–2.

77 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 6, NKBT 67.269–70; Aston, 1.176.

78 The first *saiō* as a historical person was probably Princess Sasage, appointed during the reign of Keitai (507–31), *Nihon shoki*, bk. 17, NKBT 68.24–25; Aston, 2.6. According to apparently reliable evidence in the *Nihon shoki*, *saiō* were sent to the Ise Shrine in every subsequent reign. References to *saiō* serving earlier than Keitai's reign – in other words, during the reigns of Sujin and Suinin – are probably not based on historical fact.

79 For example, King Chumong, the founder of the Koguryō kingdom, King Hyokkose, founder of Silla, and King Suro, founder of Kumgwan. See Ha Tae-hung and G. K. Mintz, trans., *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), pp. 45, 49, 43. King Suro was actually born from an egg, according to the account, but the egg is considered a symbol of the sun.

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basis, the Yamato rulers had to claim lineage of equal dignity. They also felt that their ancestral kami ought to belong exclusively to the imperial clan. Their original tutelary kami, Takamimusubi, was unsuited for such a purpose, as by that time he had been adopted as an ancestral kami by a number of other clans. So the Yamato court looked around the regions under its control for a sun kami suitable as an imperial ancestor. Kami venerated by already powerful clans were ruled out. Then the court's attention was drawn to Ise Shrine, dedicated to a sun kami worshiped since ancient times by fishermen. The shrine's location – to the east of Yamato, in the direction of the rising sun – was a suitable place for the enshrinement of a sun kami; moreover, there were few powerful provincial families there to challenge the imperial clan's appropriation of that local kami.

The court dispatched an imperial princess to serve as shaman, and representatives were sent from the Nakatomi and Imbe clans to serve as high priests, standing above the priests of local clans. Two of the ancient nature myths thought to have been told among Ise fishermen were embellished and subsumed into the imperial mythology: the Ama no Iwaya story, in which the sun hides itself in a cave and has to be coaxed out, and the story of the quarrel between the sun and her brother, the moon (Tsukuyomi), and how they went off to live separately in the daytime and nighttime heavens.[80]

Not only were the myths of provincial clans appropriated and woven into the Yamato court's mythological tradition, but the regalia – the physical symbols of the clans' sacred power – were seized by the court as well. This was an effective way of reducing the religious authority of the local clans and of forcing them to take subsidiary positions in the centralized Yamato system. For example, in a *Nihon shoki* item for the sixtieth year of Sujin's reign, Sujin dispatched a general of the Mononobe clan to seize the treasures brought from heaven by the Izumo clan's ancestral kami and kept at the Izumo Shrine. Another *Nihon shoki* account for the eighty-eighth year of Suinin's reign reports that Suinin ordered the seizure of treasures brought from Korea by Ame no Hiboko. Although most of Ame no Hiboko's descendants were inclined to comply with the order, one hid a sword beneath his clothing. But the sword was discovered and seized.[81]

These legends, and many others concerning the Yamato pursuit of

80 For the Ame no Iwaya story, see the *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.82–83; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 81–86; and the *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.112–8; Aston, 1.41–49. For the Tsukuyomi story, see *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.102–3; Aston, 1.32.

81 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 5, NKBT 67.250–1, and bk. 6, pp. 277–8; Aston, 1.162, 185–6.

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centralized power, are centered on symbols of religious authority that are prominent in the chronicle's chapters devoted to the reigns of Sujin and his successor Suinin. Tradition assigns those reigns to the first centuries B.C. and A.D., but they can probably be dated sometime in the fourth century A.D. Sujin is given a position of special importance by the *Nihon shoki:* He is the first emperor after Jimmu about whom considerable detail is provided,[82] and he is regarded as the ruler who first pacified certain regions. In other words, many of the Yamato court's efforts in the fifth and sixth centuries to reinforce its power were projected backward in time to the reign of Sujin and his successor, an apparent attempt to enhance imperial authority with the weight of tradition. The fact that the Mononobe clan, which became militarily powerful during Keitai's reign (507–31), figures in some of these earlier tales only serves to support the conjecture that the actual events reflected in early legends probably occurred in the sixth century.[83]

At Japan's most important imperial-court ceremony, the Daijōsai celebrated at the beginning of each reign, the clans performed services and told and acted out myths that symbolized their subservience to the court. The Nakatomi clan of ritualists offered prayers for the emperor's long life and health and for a bountiful harvest; the Imbe presented the emperor with the three imperial regalia; the head of the Kataribe (the storytellers' *be*) recited old legends; and the Mononobe and Ōtomo clans guarded the palace. In the services performed and tales related at the Daijōsai, nobles of powerful clans affirmed their fealty to the sovereign. The legends that explain these duties contain elements from once independent traditions that were subsumed into the imperial order.[84]

The court also incorporated many local shrines, honoring nature kami, into a centralized system. Imperial messengers were dispatched to local shrines, and the shrines were presented with sacred treasures. Shinto on the local level was further systematized through the construction of permanent shrine buildings. The court had a hand in this process, too, as the sponsorship of shrine construction projects was one way of increasing imperial authority and control at local levels.

82 Sansom, *Cultural History*, p. 32.

83 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 17, NKBT 68.35–37; Aston, 2.15–16.

84 For a description of Daijōsai ceremonies, see the *Engishiki*, KT, 26.143–57; Bock, *Engi-shiki*, 2.30–56. Notable recent Western studies of the Daijōsai are those by Felicia G. Bock, "The Great Feast of Enthronement," *Monumenta Nipponica* 45 (Spring 1990): 27–38; Nicola Liscutin, "Daijōsai: Aspects of Its History and Meaning," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 5 (1990): 25–52; and Carmen Blacker, "The *Shinza* or God-seat in the *Daijōsai* – Throne, Bed, or Incubation Couch?" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17 (June–September 1990): 180–97.

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One reason, perhaps, for erecting permanent buildings was to enshrine the *shintai*, sacred objects that had lately come to be regarded as lodging places for kami. The *shintai* were often the sorts of sacred treasures that the kami were thought to have brought with them from heaven: mirrors, swords, spears, and jewels. It was in this period of Shinto history, too, that permanent and important buildings were constructed at the shrines of Ise and Izumo: The one at Ise took the form of a grain storehouse, and the one at Izumo was modeled on a priest's residence.

In short, many features of official shrine Shinto developed during this period. At the popular level, the worship of nature kami probably continued much as it had before. But popular Shinto was also affected by the concept of the *shintai* and the construction of permanent shrine buildings. The simple veneration of vaguely conceived kami and spirits had begun to develop into a loosely organized religious system.

Period 4: The maturation of state Shinto

Early Shinto's final stage of evolution was paralleled by attempts of the central government to build a bureaucratic state like that of China. In the process, religion and polity influenced each other's development; the political urge to make the Yamato king into a Chinese-style emperor reinforced the Shinto hierarchical structure and organization; and the religious stress on the emperor as child of the sun kept his functions more sacred than secular, contributing to his eventual isolation from politics. For a time, however, the emperor did play an active role in governmental affairs, and his political position was strengthened by the Shinto idea that his lineage was superior to that of any other clan.

From the mid-seventh century to the end of the eighth, the *ritsuryō* (Chinese penal and administrative law) period, the imperial court adopted reforms modeled on the bureaucratic forms and legal practices of T'ang China and actively encouraged the introduction of other forms of Chinese culture. Superficially at least, the court intentionally became a near replica of the T'ang court. One important difference, however, was the establishment of the Council of Kami Affairs (Jingikan) at the same level as the Council of State (Daijōkan). The Council of Kami Affairs, fundamentally different from any unit in the Chinese bureaucracy, assumed control of Shinto affairs at both court and local levels.

Under the new *ritsuryō* system, many chieftains of old local clans

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such as the Izumo governor were appointed as district supervisors (*gunji*), continuing to perform magical–religious functions, possessing spiritual authority, and governing the territory and people of the same clan. An appointment as district supervisor thus meant that a chieftain's authority had been confirmed by a king.

Contemporary records, such as those kept by shrine officials, help us evaluate the chronicles and other official histories. The chronicles themselves were compiled during this period as an effort by the court to use history to its advantage. Not only did the court order the compilation of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki,* which traced Japanese history from the mythical age of kami through early legendary emperors to contemporary times, but it also ordered the compilation of information and traditions about the provinces of other clans. The resulting local gazetteers (*fudoki*) were often arranged so that they too supported the imperial clan's claim to supreme authority. In the year after the *Nihon shoki* was compiled, the court summoned its nobles and officials and had scholars read and comment on the text of that official chronicle.[85] Perhaps the court was attempting to affirm the ideology of political unity (under emperors descended from the Sun Goddess) by drawing attention to the official version of the state's traditional myths and history.

In connection with its efforts to establish a centralized bureaucratic order under the emperor, the court reformulated the old myths, creating a kami pantheon headed by the Sun Goddess. Both she and Takamimusubi were placed above the ancestral kami of other clans. All were divided into two categories, the kami of heaven and the kami of earth. This division has given rise to the hypothesis that the kami of heaven were worshiped by an invading force and that the kami of earth were venerated by the subjugated aboriginal peoples. Other scholars have suggested that the division arose from a dualistic mode of thinking – often found in primitive societies – according to which all phenomena are seen as existing in pairs of opposites.

85 References to these initial lectures on the *Nihon shoki* can be found in several sources, some of which have not been published. One such source is the *Kōnin shiki-jo,* Ōno Hitonaga's preface to his commentary on his own public lectures on the *Nihon shoki,* held in 812. According to this source, Ōno Yasumaro presented a lecture – the first in a series of seven held in the Nara and early Heian periods – in 721. The *Kōnin shiki-jo* has not survived, but portions are quoted in the Kamakura period collection *Shaku Nihongi,* KT 8.14. Another source documenting Ōno Yasumaro's lectures on the *Nihon shoki* is the *Nihon keien waka,* a collection of poems written on the occasion of the lectures. The oldest copy of this unpublished collection is kept at the Honmyō-ji in Kumamoto City. See the mid-Heian period work in Minamoto no Takaakira, *Saikyūki,* vol. 28 of *Kaitei shiseki shūran* (Tokyo: Kondō kappansho, 1902), pp. 356–7.

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In both Greece and China, similar distinctions were made between celestial and terrestrial deities, but the offerings and methods of worship differed. No such differences existed in Japan, however. The chronicles simply designate Hononinigi and the kami who accompanied him on his descent from heaven as the kami of heaven; those already residing on earth were called the kami of earth. The criteria for making the distinction were probably based on the relationship between the court and the clan that venerated the kami in question. The kami of heaven represented clans who were considered loyal retainers of the imperial court, whereas those of earth represented clans whose local power bases gave them a degree of independence.

The kami of especially important clans, moreover, were cited frequently in the chronicles. During this fourth period, the Fujiwara (formerly Nakatomi) clan became the most powerful of the court nobility, dominating other clans such as the Ōtomo and Mononobe. The Fujiwara undoubtedly influenced efforts to revise and embellish the mythology in the chronicles and the *fudoki*. Thus the prestige that the Fujiwara had attained is reflected in the importance of the roles assigned to their three guardian kami: Takemikazuchi, Futsunushi, and Ame no Koyane.

In their effort to forge ideological underpinnings for imperial authority, the court had myths of "the age of the kami" arranged in a logical sequence, beginning with the creation of the universe and ending with the divine birth of the first human emperor. The *Kojiki* relates these myths in their most coherent sequence. Each tale leads into the next, forming a logical narrative that links the emperor with the primeval creator kami.[86] Although no such coherent sequence exists in the *Nihon shoki*, which contains many tales irrelevant to the main narrative, the basic theme is the same: the divine origins of a single line of priestly emperors.

The *Kojiki* arranges the myths in this way: Seven generations of kami follow the appearance of three primeval creator kami, and finally Izanagi and Izanami enter the scene. First they produce an island from the middle of the ocean; then after their marriage there, they give birth to the main islands of Japan. Izanami then produces the fire kami and in so doing is burned to death. Her husband goes to the land of the dead in search of his deceased spouse and, upon his return, purifies himself in the ocean, creates three kami (the Sun Goddess, Tsukuyomi, and Susa no O), and assigns them to three parts of the universe.

86 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.42–147; Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 47–159.

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The tale of Susa no O's violent offenses follows. Angered, the Sun Goddess hides herself in a cave and has to be coaxed out, and Susa no O is exiled to the land of Izumo. The *Kojiki* then tells how Susa no O defeats the monster serpent Yamata no Orochi and marries the princess that the serpent was about to devour. Susa no O's descendant Ōnamuchi takes charge of Izumo. Then the Sun Goddess's grandson Hononinigi is dispatched to earth, where he settles on the island of Kyushu and persuades Ōnamuchi's descendants to hand over the rule of Izumo. Three generations of descendants then rule the land. The second volume of the *Kojiki* continues with the story of later descendants, beginning with the nation's founder (Jimmu) who leads an expedition to central Honshu and settles in the Yamato basin.

Both the chronicles and court ceremonies emphasize the emperor's role as the "child of the sun." Like other provincial (or clan federation) priest-kings, the emperor came to be regarded as a kami incarnate. Perhaps the most significant of the rituals stressing this concept was held at the Daijōsai, conducted upon the emperor's accession to the throne. In this ceremony, the emperor communed with Takamimusubi and other kami by sharing with them a meal prepared from rice grown in consecrated fields. (Later, the Sun Goddess replaced Takamimusubi as the central figure in this rite.) During this fourth period, the Daijōsai was clearly distinguished from the yearly harvest festival (the Niinamesai), and its sacred affirmation of imperial authority was emphasized. The ceremonies that other clans held to symbolize their submission to the throne were made into rituals, giving them their most complex and impressive form.

Though Shinto was well on its way to becoming an institutionalized religion that supported the state, the agricultural elements were retained. One of the customs that developed during this fourth period reminds us of Shinto's earlier roots: Every twenty years the buildings at Ise Shrine are torn down, and new ones are built at an alternative site. At one time this custom was practiced not only at Ise but also at the Sumiyoshi Shrine in Settsu Province (Osaka Prefecture), the Katori Shrine in Shimofusa Province (Chiba Prefecture), and the Kashima Shrine in Hitachi Province (Ibaraki Prefecture).[87] Once, as we have seen, the kami were thought of as visitors, and temporary sanctuaries were built to welcome them. Later on, permanent shrine buildings were erected. The custom of periodically destroying and

87 The chronicle *Nihon kōki*, vol. 5 of the *Rikkokushi* (Osaka: Asahi shimbunsha, 1929), compiled in the early Heian period, describes these early shrine customs. Also see Inagaki Eizō, *Jinja to reibyō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1971), pp. 178–9.

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reconstructing shrine buildings seems to hark back to a time when kami were housed in structures built only at festival time.

During this period, imported Buddhism challenged and influenced Shinto, finally embracing it to form a syncretic faith. Immediately after Buddhism was introduced in the sixth century, disputes arose between its adherents and clans which maintained that their kami were offended by the adoption of a foreign religion. But Buddhism was regarded as an efficacious form of magic that ensured the welfare of the emperor and state. It was argued, moreover, that Buddhism was an integral part of the Chinese culture that was sure to strengthen the state and enhance imperial authority. Finally Buddhism was a support of the state. Its doctrines were spread among the nobility, some of whom comprehended Buddhist teachings with increasing degrees of sophistication. The court sponsored the construction of temples and supplied them with sacred images; Buddhist monks were invited to recite the sutras at court; and Buddhist rituals were included in state ceremonials. Court-supported Buddhism flourished especially in the Nara period (710–94), when great temples were constructed in the new capital, monks were given official ranking and their ordination was regulated by the state, and in all provinces temples were built under official auspices. The function of the official Buddhism of this period was to ensure the welfare of the state. The salvation of individual souls or the rebirth of individuals after death were concerns left largely to the unordained clergy, who also practiced magic, divination, and shamanic methods of healing and were persecuted for their heresy.

The aristocratic Buddhist faithful did not abandon the native kami but simply, it seems, assigned different functions to Shinto and Buddhism. Shinto explained the origins of the Japanese state and sanctified the position and functions of emperors, even though aristocrats below the emperor claimed descent from other kami. Shinto, moreover, linked the court to its own past and to the animistic nature worship that still underlay the whole structure of Japanese society. Buddhism, on the other hand, provided a metaphysical cosmic view elaborated by sophisticated teachings. The Japanese state order was seen as a reflection of the Buddhist world order. For example, Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–49) installed a statue of the Rushana Buddha (Vairocana) as the central object of worship at the great Tōdai-ji. In the doctrines of the Kegon sect, Vairocana occupies the center of the cosmos, and all the Buddhas who surround him are his manifestations. The emperor seems to have related his idea of imperial hegemony to

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the centrality of Rushana within the Buddhist system.[88] Thus Buddhism could be used to support the throne's supremacy, but the imperial clan's claim to the throne was ultimately guaranteed by Shinto, which declared the emperor to be a descendant of the Sun Goddess and a kami incarnate.

At the end of the Nara period, Buddhism and Shinto began to form a syncretic system. The kami were seen as sentient creatures, one step higher than human beings but still possessed by carnal passions and in need of the Buddha's salvation. On the other hand, kami were regarded as guardians of the Buddhist law. The development of this syncretism reflects similar efforts in India and China to incorporate native deities into the Buddhist order.

The *Nihon ryōiki,* compiled in the early Heian period by the Yakushi-ji monk Keikai, is thought to contain many folk tales that reflect the popular Buddhism of the Nara period. Some of these point to the existence of a Shinto–Buddhist syncretism at a popular level. In one *Ryōiki* tale, the kami venerated at Taga Shrine in Ōmi Province (Shiga Prefecture) appeared as a small white monkey and asked that a Buddhist monk read the sutras to him. The *Ryōiki* also tells how En no Ozunu, a legendary practitioner of both Buddhist and Shinto magic arts, forced the fearsome kami of Mt. Kazuraki, Hitokotonushi, to sling a bridge from Kazuraki to Kinpu, a distant mountain.[89] The kami in both tales were connected with the imperial clan in legends that appear in the *Kojiki,* if not in the *Ryōiki* itself: The kami of Taga shrine is identified as Izanagi, and the Mt. Kazuraki kami revealed himself to King Yūryaku (r. 456–79) when he visited that mountain.[90]

Beginning in the Nara period, the highest levels of Buddhism and Shinto were affected by the belief that kami were guardians of the Buddhist law. Buddhist temples called *jingū-ji* (shrine temples) were established on the precincts of the nation's most important shrines, such as Usa, Ise, Tado, Sumiyoshi, and Kashima. Buddhist monks read sutras to the kami, and the kami themselves were often called *bosatsu* (bodhisattvas). In 741, during the reign of Emperor Shōmu, the court presented copies of the Lotus Sutra to the Usa Shrine, and monks were sent to read the sutra to Hachiman, the kami worshiped

88 Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 119–22.

89 *Nihon ryōiki,* NKBT 70.385–9, 135–7, trans. Kyoko Motomichi Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon Ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 253–5, 140–2.

90 *Kojiki,* bk. 1, NKBT 1.73; Philippi, *Kojiki,* p. 73; and *Kojiki,* bk. 3, NKBT 1.316–17; Philippi, *Kojiki,* pp. 360–1.

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there. In 749, when the Tōdai-ji and its great Rushana image were completed, Empress Kōken issued an imperial decree thanking Hachiman for his assistance with the project.

The *Shoku Nihongi* describes Kōken's visit to Tōdai-ji on this occasion. The empress was accompanied by her father Shōmu, who had ordered the making of the great Buddha statue, and by Ōga Morime, priestess of the Usa Grand Shrine. As a representative, perhaps, of Hachiman, the priestess was carried to the temple on a purple-colored palanquin. The empress had fifty monks pay homage to the Buddha image and chant sutras, and various dances were performed in honor of the Buddha and of Hachiman. Empress Kōken then bestowed the highest court rank on Hachiman.[91]

Buddhism also influenced Shinto arts and architecture. There were no images of kami before the development of Shinto iconography in the Nara period. Though the earliest extant examples of Shinto images date from the Heian period, records suggest that the practice of making such images began slightly earlier. For example, an image of the kami at Tado Shrine of Ise was installed and venerated there, according to shrine records dated 763. The text also names the kami a *bosatsu*.[92] The *Gishikichō*, records of the Ise Shrine compiled in 804, mentions the earlier completion of an image of Tsukuyomi as a man riding a horse.[93]

By the end of the Nara period, Buddhist architectural style began to influence the construction of shrine buildings. Early shrines such as Izumo and Ise had been built in simple form that resembled native buildings used for dwellings or storehouses. Natural, unpainted wood was used. But shrines constructed in the Nara period, such as Kasuga in the capital and Usa, were sometimes more elaborate. Roofs took on curved lines; pillars and railings were stained with vermilion lacquer; and the pillars were set on foundation stones. The main hall at Usa, in particular, was modeled on the Buddhist architectural style in which two symmetrical halls are joined under one roof. Perhaps it was felt that such a setting would be a suitable place for monks to recite sutras to the kami.[94]

Thus by the end of the eighth century, Shinto had evolved into a complex religious system that supported the Japanese state, and it formed a syncretic relationship with Buddhism. Though official Shinto

91 For the presentation of sutras to Usa Shrine, see *Shoku nihongi*, KT 2.165. For the Usa priestess's visit to the Tōdai-ji, see p. 206.

92 *Ise no kuni Tado jingūji garan engi narabi ni shizaichō*, in Hanawa Hokiichi, ed., *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, vol. 27 (Tokyo: Zoku gunshoruijū kanseikai, 1927), 2.350.

93 *Kōtai jingū gishikichō*, in *Gunsho ruijū*, 1.15.

94 Inagaki, *Kodai no jinja kenchiku*, pp. 78–81; Hayashino Masunori and Sakurai Toshio, *Jinja no kenchiku* (Kyoto: Kawahara shoten, 1974), pp. 309–14.

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would change after the Nara period, it was given a certain fixed form when some of its basic myths were committed to writing. Shinto was retained in the Japanese belief structure, even though it never developed the metaphysical worldview or system of ethics that characterize world religions. Perhaps this was because of its close connection with Japanese Buddhism, which had enough metaphysics and ethics to serve both. On the popular level, Shinto still functioned as the guarantor of a plentiful supply of food, whether from field, mountain, or sea. Thus Shinto continued to be focused on people's most basic fears – illness, natural disaster, infertility, and harvest failure – and to give them hope that such disasters could be prevented by supernatural intervention.

In summary, the history of Shinto demonstrates the retention of primitive elements, even as the religion evolved into more complex forms. The kami that appear in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* had their origin in the animistic beliefs of the Jōmon and the Yayoi periods. By the seventh and eighth centuries, these primitive beliefs had been incorporated into an official, written mythological system arranged to support imperial power. Other primitive beliefs and practices – such as shamanism, divination, and magic – were retained in Shinto, but with considerable alteration.

The early development of Shinto reflects its animistic origins. Natural objects such as rocks and trees must have seemed appropriate lodgings for kami who were regarded as spirits of mountains or forests, and the first buildings that enshrined kami were only temporary structures. The ancient Japanese thought of kami as nature spirits, not as their own dead ancestors. But in the Burial Mound period, powerful clans began to trace their descent back to important local kami.

State Shinto developed as the Yamato court appropriated the worship of provincial kami. During this period, certain features common in present-day Shinto emerged: permanent shrine buildings and the use of objects such as mirrors, swords, and jewels to house and represent the kami.

In the final period of development, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, was placed at the apex of the Shinto structure. The final systemization of Shinto, culminating in the recording of officially approved versions of the myths in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, accompanied the adoption of Chinese-style governmental patterns. Even as Shinto became an organized religious system that sanctioned the highest temporal authorities, the newly imported Buddhism transformed the artifacts, practices, and beliefs of Japan's ancient native faith.

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CHAPTER 7

EARLY BUDDHA WORSHIP

Much of the momentum for the spread of Buddhism from India to distant regions of Asia was generated by the patronage of expanding empires. After the historic Buddha's (Śākyamuni's) teachings were embraced by India's first empire builder, the religion began to assume the character of a "world religion" as emperors of the Mauryan empire became believers and practitioners. Then when Buddhism moved, in the first century A.D., across central Asia to China, Chinese emperors of the Han dynasty welcomed Indian monks bearing Buddhist scriptures, patronized ambitious translation projects that produced a great corpus of sacred literature, and took an active interest in Buddhist statues made in a Greek or northwest Indian style.[1]

Following the demise of the Later Han empire early in the third century, China was torn by internal strife for more than three centuries. A new empire was not formed until the rise of the Sui dynasty in 589. Meanwhile, Buddhism continued to prosper as Chinese kings vied with one another in supporting Buddhist monks. They even sponsored contests in the translation of Buddhist sutras. Two especially famous monks enjoyed royal patronage during these years of disunity: Kumārajīva (350–414), an eminent translator of Buddhist texts, and Tao-an (312–85), known as the earliest Chinese systematizer. Tao-an was the compiler of China's first comprehensive catalogue of Buddhist texts (*Tsung-li-chung-ching-mu-lu*) that reportedly contained 639 titles in 886 volumes.[2] A second catalogue containing 2,211 titles in 4,251 volumes was compiled by Seng-yu (445–518) a century later.

Śākyamuni's teachings were meant to show how enlightenment

1 For a summary treatment of the pre-Han background of Buddhism and its development in China during the Han dynasty, see Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 3–53. The origins of Buddhist statues have been studied by Takada Osamu, *Butsuzō no kigen* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967).

2 Although Tao-an's compilation no longer exists as an independent work, its entries are incorporated into fascicles 3 through 5 of Seng-yu's "Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi," in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, 55.15b–40c.

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could be achieved and human misery eliminated by rejecting attachments to anything impermanent, but at the hands of Chinese religionists who studied Buddhist scriptures and founded Chinese schools in this period of disunity, the religion was deeply influenced by Taoist beliefs and practices.[3] It came to be honored, especially in north China, mainly for its magic power to provide material benefits and, along with Taoism and Confucianism, as an ideological support for kingly authority.

As powerful kingdoms emerged in Korea and Japan during those centuries of Chinese disunity, their leaders were quick to see that Buddhism occupied a central position in Chinese conceptions of sovereignty and to conclude that the adoption of this religion, together with other Chinese techniques for increasing the power of a state, would facilitate their own efforts to tighten control over more territory and more people. Thus the rise of the Korean kingdoms was paralleled and colored by the kingly support of Buddhism. Because Japan stood at the end of this northeast Asian line of Buddhist transmission and was affected by steps taken at previous points along that line, this chapter will open with a brief sketch of the spread of Buddhism into Korea's three largest kingdoms.[4]

BUDDHISM AND THE RISE OF THE KOREAN KINGDOMS

Of the three great Korean kingdoms to emerge during the fourth century A.D., the first was Koguryŏ. Located directly across the northern border of China and benefiting from the services of Chinese officials who had served in north Korea, Koguryŏ was also the first to be affected politically and culturally by ruler-supported Buddhism. Paekche, the second independent kingdom to surface, was somewhat slower to adopt Chinese methods and religious practices, for its position southwest of Koguryŏ made it impossible for its envoys to reach the Chinese court without crossing either Koguryŏ or the North China Sea. The third Korean kingdom to be born in that fourth century was Silla. Situated along the southeastern coast of Korea, its kings were even slower to turn to Chinese forms of governance, but their later adoption of Chinese techniques and ideas was sweeping and thorough. Much of the Bud-

3 Kamada Shigeo, *Chūgoku Bukkyō tsūshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978), pp. 18–24; Tsukamoto Zenryū, *Chūgoku Bukkyō tsūshi* (Tokyo: Suzuki gakujutsu zaidan, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 45–47.

4 The first section of this chapter, "Buddhism and the Rise of the Korean Kingdoms," was first written by Kōyū Sonoda, translated by John W. Buscaglia, and condensed by Delmer M. Brown, who wrote the remaining sections.

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dhism that reached Japan in the sixth century came from these three Korean kingdoms and affected, and was affected by, rulership in ways that were both similar and different. The process by which the kings of each Korean state attempted to identify their rule with the worship of Buddha reveals a central aspect of cultural life throughout Asia in these early times: a persistent interaction between the role of a ruler as a conductor of religious rites and his role as a possessor of political power, an interaction reflected in the meaning and use of the Japanese words *ken'i* (spiritual authority) and *kenryoku* (physical authority).

Koguryŏ

Koguryŏ was founded in A.D. 313 when a federation of non-Chinese tribes of Tungus lineage succeeded in subjugating Lo-lang, China's north Korean commandery.[5] By the end of that century, direct Chinese control over the area was largely eliminated as King Sosurim (r. 371–84) began to build a strong centralized state, to sponsor Buddhism, to establish a National Confucian Academy (the T'aehak), and to institute a Chinese-style legal system. The power that flowed from these reforms enabled his successors, notably King Kwanggaet'o (r. 391–413), to increase the size and strength of Koguryŏ by winning military victories against distant enemies. According to a memorial stone erected in 414, King Kwanggaet'o even repelled Japanese (Wa) invaders in the year 399.[6]

The origins of Buddhism in Koguryŏ are closely linked with events occurring as early as the Sosurim reign. According to an old Korean chronicle (the *Samguk sagi*), in 372 King Fu-chien of the north China dynasty of Former Ch'in sent to Sosurim a Buddhist monk (Shun-tao) bringing with him Buddhist scriptures and images. The same source adds that Sosurim responded by sending an envoy to China who returned to Koguryŏ two years later accompanied by another monk (A-tao) and that in 375 Sosurim erected two Buddhist temples: one for each of the Chinese monks who were sent to Koguryŏ in diplomatic exchanges with the kingdom of Former Ch'in. A third Buddhist temple was built in 392 by Kwanggaet'o, the dedication for which included these words: "Believing in Buddhism, we seek prosperity."[7]

5 Ikeuchi Hiroshi, *Man–Sen shi kenkyū: jōsei hen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 85–107.

6 Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 38.

7 Kogugwan 9 and Kwanggaet'o 3, *Samguk sagi*, fascicle 18.

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The reign of King Kwanggaet'o is thought of as Koguryŏ's golden age of political might and Buddhist splendor. At the very start of his illustrious reign, Kwanggaet'o opened nine Buddhist temples. A few years later, according to both Korean and Chinese sources, a Chinese monk by the name of T'an-shih arrived in Koguryŏ with copies of excerpts from dozens of sutras and vinayas in the Chinese Buddhist canon. T'an-shih preached Buddhism in Koguryŏ for ten years, returning to China in 405.[8] A recently excavated tomb found on the outskirts of P'yŏngyang, one judged to be that of a Koguryŏ aristocrat who died in 408, contains a memorial inscription describing the deceased as a "disciple of Śākyamuni."[9] Tamura Enchō's study leads him to conclude that the words of the inscription may have been taken from the *Mi-le-hsia-sheng-ching* sutra (translated into Chinese between 384 and 385), a copy of which was probably brought to Koguryŏ by T'an-shih in 396.[10] T'an-shih seems, however, to have become more famous for his miraculous powers than for his knowledge of Buddhist scripture: He was referred to as the "pure-footed priest" because his feet were always clean, even after walking through mud.[11]

In 1978 a remarkable archaeological discovery was made at the site of a Buddhist monastery built by King Changsu (413–91) soon after the Koguryŏ capital was move to P'yŏngyang in 427. Some one hundred twenty meters from the monastery was a "King Tongmyŏng tomb" with inscriptions and frescoes suggesting that Changsu was the principal conductor of ceremonies performed at both the ancestral tomb of King Tongmyŏng and the nearby Buddhist monastery.[12] The *Samguk sagi* contains information that gives us a sense of the tomb's significance. We are told that each of the five ancient tribes of Koguryŏ had their own ancestral tomb, worshiped their own patriarch, and gathered in the tenth month of every year to perform a *tongmyŏng* ("petition to the east") rite honoring a heavenly deity called Susin.[13] Further elucidation of the *tongmyŏng* has been supplied by Mishina Shōei, whose studies of ancient Korean myths show that the rite had a dual character: a harvest festival in which Susin was welcomed to a sacred spot along the Yalu River in the eastern precincts of

8 "Hōgen-ji Chishō daishi jakushō tōhi," in Chōsen sōtokufu, ed., *Chōsen kinseki sōran* (Seoul: Chōsen sōtokufu, 1919): I.89.

9 Che-hi, "Atarashiku hakkutsu sareta Toku-ko-ri funbō," *Chōsen gahō* (November 1979): 6–7.

10 Tamura Enchō, *Kodai Chōsen Bukkyō to Nihon Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1970), pp. 8, 81.

11 See *Kao Seng Chuan*. In *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, 50, p. 392.

12 Hotta Keiichi, trans. "Atarashiku hakkutsu seiri shita Kokuri tōmei ō ryō," *Kodaigaku kenkyū* 92 (May 1980): 19–23.

13 Cited in "Tung-i chuan" of *Wei shu*, fascicle 30.

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the ancient Koguryŏ capital, and an ancestral rite in which the tribes worshiped their primordial patriarch. A *tongmyŏng* festival thus included elements of both the agricultural mother-earth worship of south Asia and the livestock-raising shamanism of north Asia.[14]

The location, construction, and style of King Tongmyŏng's tomb and the religious outlook reflected in its inscriptions substantiate the conjecture that the tomb was a sacred place for the ancient *tongmyŏng* rite and that it was moved to P'yŏngyang when King Changsu built his capital there in 427. Religious historians note, too, that the tomb's frescoes do not contain traditional images of the four-constellation deities but feature, instead, lotus-blossom designs and other ornamentation used for depicting a Buddhist paradise.[15]

At the ruins of the Buddhist monastery itself – probably built soon after P'yŏngyang became the capital – archaeologists have found the remains of main halls arranged around three sides of a pagoda, giving the monastery a pagoda-centered pattern that is seen at other P'yŏngyang temples and at the Asuka-dera erected in Japan a century or so later.[16] This discovery of similarities between the P'yŏngyang temples and the Asuka-dera suggests that Koguryŏ's influence on Japanese Buddhism was somewhat deeper than is indicated by the mere presence in Japan – reported in a 593 item of the *Nihon shoki* – of a Buddhist priest from Koguryŏ.[17] As we shall see, Japanese emperors and empresses, like the Koguryŏ kings before them, endeavored to strengthen their spiritual authority after 645 by playing a leading role in the development of Japanese Buddhism while continuing at the same time to conduct rites honoring imperial ancestors and ancestral kami.

Koguryŏ was influenced by the "state Buddhism" of China's northern kingdoms, particularly after King Changsu moved his capital to P'yŏngyang in 427 and initiated the practice of paying tribute to the Northern Wei, establishing a tributary relationship that was formalized in 435. Henceforth Koguryŏ maintained close relations with that north China court, welcoming the importation of Buddhist teachings

14 Mishina Shōei, *Kodai saisei to kokurei shinkō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), pp. 49, 64, 173, 159–230, and *Shinwa to Bunka ryōiki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971), pp. 530–31.

15 Hotta, "Atarashiku hakkutsu seiri."

16 Sugaya Fuminori, "Hakkakudō no konryū o tsūjite mita kofun shūmatsuji no ichi yōsō," *Shisen* 42 (1971): pp. 32–46. A tile was also found on which was engraved the words *tomb temple*.

17 Suiko 1 (593) 4/10, in Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 68, pp. 172–5. Translated by W. G. Aston, *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (hereafter cited as Aston) (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pt. 2, p. 123.

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and rites that made the worship of Buddha an increasingly strong support for the ruler's spiritual authority.[18]

Paekche

Korea's second powerful and independent kingdom, Paekche, came into existence during the first half of the fourth century A.D. when one of the several Mahan states located in the Han River basin absorbed a neighboring state and subjugated the Chinese commandery of Taifang. Within a few decades, Paekche had become embroiled in war with Koguryŏ to the north and, according to the *Samguk sagi*, invaded the Koguryŏ capital in 371 and killed its king. In the following year, Paekche began paying tribute to the Eastern Chin court of south China. Tradition has it that Buddhism was first introduced to Paekche by a Chinese monk arriving from Eastern Chin in 384.[19] But Buddhism did not become a major current of Paekche's cultural history until the much later reign of King Muryŏng (501–23).

Both Korean and Chinese sources suggest that Paekche's relative slowness in accepting Buddhism was due not simply to its contact with a southern China court, where aristocratic rather than state-oriented Buddhism flourished, but to internal conditions that made its people unreceptive to foreign beliefs and ideas. Whereas Paekche's royal family came from the immigrant Puyŏ clan,[20] a major ethnic constituent of the state's population was the indigenous clan of Han, over which the rulers were never able to gain full control.[21] Buddhism was accepted by the royal family but was slow to permeate the lives of the Han people. This was due, in part, to the community-centered attitudes of an agricultural people who resisted the adoption of foreign religious practices introduced by immigrant leaders.

An analysis of the rituals performed in Paekche show that they, like those in Koguryŏ to the north, were influenced by both northern shamanism and southern agricultural beliefs. But in Paekche (especially among the Han people) the latter were older and stronger, as is indicated by the nature of the sacred place (the *sotsu*) outside an agricultural village, where a large pole was erected and bells and drums were used when worshiping the village deity at planting and

18 Lee, *A New History of Korea*, pp. 38–40.

19 Hsiaŏ Wu-ti, *T'ai-yuan* 9, in *Chin shu*, fascicle 9; Suematsu Yasukazu, *Shiragi shi no sho mondai* (Tokyo: Tōyō bunkō, 1954), p. 135.

20 Entry for southern Puyŏ in *Samguk sagi*, fascicle 2, and for Paekche patriarch Onjo, fascicle 23; and "I-man chuan" of *Sung shu*, fascicle 97.

21 Hatada Takashi, *Chōsen shi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1959), p. 32.

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harvesting times of the year. Whereas a Koguryŏ tomb was focused on ancestors and on blood-related status, a Paekche *sotsu* stood at the religious center of a village and was the place where villagers worshiped their deity mainly for obtaining good crops.[22] Thus Paekche's ritual system was not a type that could easily be used by a ruler attempting to strengthen his authority through the introduction of a world religion.

But a crisis was created in 475 when Paekche was assaulted, and its capital city of Hansŏng captured, by the military forces of Koguryŏ's King Changsu. A new capital was then established at Ungjin in the heart of Han territory. Administrative reforms, extensive and effective during the reign of King Muryŏng (501–23), resulted in the importation of new bureaucratic arrangements and a more rapid spread of Buddhism. When Muryŏng dispatched an envoy to the Liang court of southern China in 521, he received a Chinese greeting that stated that "having survived this crisis of state, Paekche is, and will continue to be, strong."[23]

In 1971 archaeologists discovered a tile tomb that had been made for the burial of King Muryŏng, who died in 523, and for the burial of his queen who died three years later. Although the tomb was found to contain epitaph stones and superb funerary objects, nothing indicated that Muryŏng's worship of Buddha was anything like what had developed in Koguryŏ. The honeysuckle arabesque and lotus-blossom designs used in the ornamentation of gold crowns, wooden tables, and footrests represent the essence of south China Buddhist art. The designs adorning the walls of the burial chamber and the corridor leading to it are similar to those found in Buddhist temples constructed after the capital was moved to Puyŏ in 538.[24] Pak Yongjin and Inagaki Shinya have pointed out that the styles and motifs of the tiles used in Paekche temples built before the capital was moved to Puyŏ are similar to those unearthed from the ruins of temples erected in south China at about that same time.[25]

22 *San-kuo chih,* fascicle 30; entry for Korean Han tribes in "Tung-i chuan" of *Wei shu;* and Mishina, *Kodai saisei to kokurei shinkō,* pp. 22, 243–8.

23 Entry for Paekche in "Man-i chuan," *Liang shu,* fascicle 54.

24 Kim Wŏn-gyŏng and Arimatsu Kōichi, eds., *Bunei ōryō* (Tokyo: Kondō shuppansha, 1979); Tamura Enchō, "Kudara Bukkyō-shi josetsu," in Tamura Enchō et al., eds., *Kudara bunka to Asuka bunka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1978), p. 322; Karube Jion, *Kudara bijutsu* (Tokyo: Hōunsha, 1946), p. 245.

25 Pak Yongjin, "Kudara gatō no taikei-teki bunrui: noki marugawara o chūshin to shite," in Tamura et al., eds., *Kudara bunka to Asuka bunka;* Inagaki Shinya, "Shiragi no kogawara to Asuka Hakuhō jidai kogawara no Shiragi-teki yōso," in Tamura Enchō and Chin Hong-sok, eds., *Shiragi to Nihon kodai bunka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1981).

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The golden age of Buddhism in Paekche did not begin, however, until after King Sŏngmyŏng had moved his capital to Puyŏ (then called Sabi) in 538. Numerous temples were erected there soon afterward.[26] Ceramic tiles from Paekche's Buddhist structures of this period exhibit a uniquely subtle beauty and originality that bespeak a deep and broad acceptance of the Buddhist faith. Through a study of the tiles made for Buddhist temples in the sixth century, we can trace the path by which Buddhism was transmitted from the south China court of Liang through the south Korean state of Paekche to Japan. Reports recorded in the history of Liang (*Liang shu*) indicate that four missions were sent to Paekche during the reign of King Sŏngmyŏng (523–54) and that Paekche had requested commentaries on the *Nieh-p'anching*, other Buddhist scriptures, Confucian texts, and artisans.[27] As we shall see, it was during this golden age of Buddhism in Paekche that the religion was introduced to Japan from that particular Korean kingdom. A south China variety of Buddhism, it arrived in Japan by way of Paekche from the Chinese state of Liang then ruled by Emperor Wu-ti, who has been described as the most pious Buddhist devotee in the whole of Chinese history.[28]

Silla

At about the time that Paekche was coming into existence on the southwestern side of the Korean peninsula, the third strong and independent kingdom, Silla, was emerging to the southeast. By the seventh century, Silla dominated the entire peninsula. But until the reign of King Pŏphŭng (514–40), it was little more than a loose federation of walled-town states ruled by hereditary heads of the Kim clan.[29] Silla's development as a state was slower than that of Koguryŏ or Paekche, not only because of its location farther away from the Chinese source of advanced culture and control techniques, but also because as an agricultural society, Silla lacked powerful and independent lineages of the type found in Koguryŏ and Paekche. Moreover, until the reign of Pŏphŭng in the first half of the sixth century, Silla was harassed by

26 Kitano Kōhei, "Kudara jidai ji'in chi no bumpu to ritchi," in Tamura et al., eds., *Kudara bunka to Asuka bunka*, pp. 115–18.

27 Wu-ti, "T'ien-chien," vol. 2 of *Liang shu*, fascicle 2; Imanishi Ryū, *Kudara shi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Chikazawa shoten, 1934), pp. 131, 267; and Keitai 7/6 and 10/9, *Nihon shoki*, NKBT 68.28–29, 33–35.

28 Mori Mikisaburō, *Ryō no Butei: Bukkyō ōchō no higeki* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1956), p. 134–69.

29 Lee, *A New History of Korea*, pp. 40–43.

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strong neighbors: Koguryŏ to the north, Paekche to the west, and Kaya and Japan to the south.

But a number of interacting developments contributed to a sudden increase in King Pŏphŭng's power and control. He benefited, first, from a sharp increase in agricultural productivity arising mainly from the adoption of such important agricultural techniques as tilling the land with ox-drawn plows and keeping the rice fields watered by improved methods of irrigation. But Pŏphŭng also adopted advanced methods of strengthening administrative control. After issuing an order that he was henceforth to be referred to by the Chinese title for king (*wang*), Pŏphŭng promulgated a code of administrative law in 520 and changed the era name to Kŏnwŏn (New Beginning) in 536. Between 527 and 535 he also adopted Buddhism as a means of increasing his spiritual authority over the emerging Silla state.[30]

Just how did this happen? An examination of the priestly role that Pŏphŭng had previously played in rites performed at the most sacred traditional places of worship (*sobol*) suggests that the king's position as chief priest had developed rather slowly and that, after the official adoption of Buddhism, was changed in no fundamental way. He simply took on the additional role of Buddhism's chief patron. The earlier process by which a Silla king had assumed the role of chief priest of all indigenous rites cannot be easily traced, but it was probably slower than in either Koguryŏ or Paekche, as state formation was not supported by a strong aristocratic lineage group like the Kyeru of Koguryŏ or by a militant immigrant clan such as the Puyŏ clan of Paekche. Instead, a Silla king came from a line of hereditary chief priests, the Hyŏkkŏse of Saro, who first conducted rites for a cluster of agricultural villages and then gradually gained religious and secular authority over more and more villages. The resultant federation of agricultural communities was clearly accompanied by the rise of federated festivals at which the Silla king served as chief priest of rites that stood above, and embraced, those held at each village shrine (*sobol*).[31]

As in Koguryŏ and Paekche at an earlier time, the spread of Buddhism as an element of a Silla king's spiritual authority came in two distinct stages: an initial stage of reform and a later golden age. Koguryŏ's earlier period of reform had come under Sosurim in the last half of the fourth century, and Paekche's under Muryŏng at the beginning of the sixth, but for Silla it did not come until the reign of King Pŏphŭng in the middle of the sixth century. As for the later golden age

30 Ibid., p. 43. 31 Mishina, *Kodai saisei to kokurei shinkō*, pp. 554–81.

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of state power and Buddhist prosperity, Koguryŏ's came during the reign of King Kwanggaet'o early in the fifth century, and Paekche's at the time of King Sŏngmyŏng in the middle of the sixth. But Silla's was during the reign of King Chinhŭng in the third quarter of the sixth century. Thus the adoption and spread of Buddhism in Silla came at least a full century later than in Koguryŏ to the north, but only a few years later than in Paekche to the west.

And as in the cases of Koguryŏ and Paekche, Silla was first introduced to Buddhism, according to written sources, by monks sent to the king from a neighboring state. The tradition recorded in the *Samguk sagi* contains three significant points: (1) that Buddhism was officially adopted in the fifteenth year of the reign of King Pŏphŭng (527 or 528), whose name can be literally translated as "the king under whom Buddhism flourished"; (2) that this event was preceded by an earlier arrival of a Buddhist monk from Koguryŏ, accompanying an envoy from Liang bearing incense for a Buddhist offering; and (3) that for a time during Pŏphŭng's reign, only one minister advocated the recognition of Buddhism, a minister who was later put to death.[32] A consideration of the findings of Suematsu Yasukazu, who made a careful comparative analysis of the sources, leads me to conclude that Buddhism was probably first introduced to Silla some time after 522 by a monk (A-tao) who accompanied an envoy from the Chinese state of Liang. The envoy was apparently sent to Silla in response to an official dispatched to Liang in 521. The arrival of this incense-bearing envoy from Liang was probably followed by the adoption of Buddhism, as recommended by the Liang emperor.[33]

Archaeologists provide concrete and convincing evidence of the spread of Buddhism into Silla during the reign of Pŏphŭng. Their findings are mainly from excavations made at the remains of the Hŭngnyun temple which, known as Silla's first government-administered Buddhist institution, is said to have started construction in 527 when Silla first adopted the religion and to have finished in 544. Although excavations have not yet been completed and the finds have not been fully studied and analyzed, an earthen dais found there may have been a part of the foundation for a golden hall at the original Hŭngnyun temple. The layout of the compound is not yet clear, but according to recent reports, the round eave tiles (the so-called stirrup tiles) unearthed there have the eight-petal lotus designs (heart-shaped petals, high-relief-

32 Wu-ti, P'u-t'ung 2/11, *Liang shu*, fascicle 3; Suematsu, *Shiragi shi no sho mondai*, pp. 218–307.

33 Suematsu, *Shiragi shi no sho mondai*, pp. 18–26.

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centers, and curl-back tips) typical of tiles found at contemporary temple sites in both Paekche and Liang.[34] It is thus thought that Silla Buddhism, during the reign of Pŏphŭng, was of a south China type introduced from Liang by way of Paekche.

Silla's golden age of Buddhist prosperity and state growth came in the later reign of King Chinhŭng (540–75), a time of vigorous territorial expansion. In 551 Chinhŭng, then an ally of King Sŏngmyŏng of Paekche, wrested from Koguryŏ ten districts in the Han River basin. In the following year he sent armies against Paekche, breaking an alliance that had existed for 120 years, and seized the whole of the lower Han region, giving Silla an outlet on the North China Sea that afforded direct passage to China. During another period of active expansion between 561 and 568, Chinhŭng set up inscribed stone monuments at frontier points of his expanded territory. Four of these are known as the oldest inscribed Silla monuments in existence. At the head of a list of names on one are the words "the Buddhist monks Pŏpjang and Hyeryŏng,"[35] suggesting that Buddhist priests outranked even generals and officials who had participated in Chinhŭng's successful invasion of neighboring territory and whose names were inscribed below the names of the two monks.

In recent years archaeological investigations have also been carried out at the site of Hwangryongsa, the leading temple of Silla's golden age, whose construction was begun in 553 – just after King Chinhŭng succeeded in seizing territory along the coast of the North China Sea – and completed in 566.[36] Excavations made there disclose the remains of a pagoda surrounded by three golden halls, as well as tiles that suggest Koguryŏ origins and connections. The traditional theory that Silla Buddhism was influenced first by Koguryŏ and then by Paekche therefore must be reversed: The Buddhism of the earlier Pŏphŭng period was introduced from Liang of south China through Paekche, but the Buddhism of the later golden age of King Chinhŭng came from north China by way of Koguryŏ. Inagaki Shinya pointed out that the appearance of north China tiles at Hwangryongsa logically followed Silla's 552 occupation of the lower Han River basin.[37]

34 Kim Chŏnggi, "Bukkyō kenchiku," in Tamura and Chin, eds., *Shiragi to Nihon kodai bunka*, pp. 118–20; Inagaki, "Shiragi no kogawara," p. 161.

35 Ikeuchi, *Man–Sen shi kenkyū: jōsei hen*, 2.1–96; Suematsu, *Shiragi shi no sho mondai*, pp. 276–94, 439–49.

36 The temple's image was not cast until 574, and its famous nine-storied pagoda was not built until the middle of the following century.

37 Kim Chŏnggi, "Bukkyō shigaku," pp. 120–6; Inagaki, "Shiragi no kogawara," pp. 164–73.

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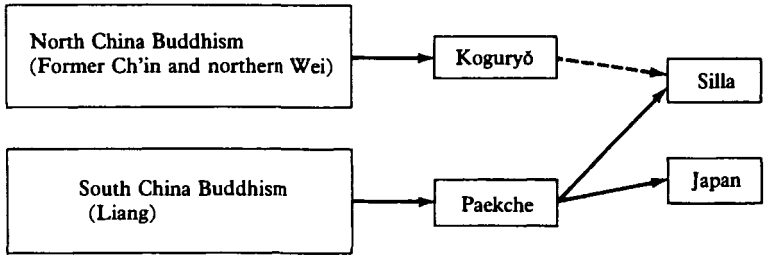

Figure 7.1. Diagram showing spread of Buddhism from China to Japan.

A linkage between Silla and Koguryŏ (and north China) after 552 is also corroborated by a biographical account, recorded in the *Samguk sagi*, of General Kŏ Yŏmbu of Silla. On his triumphal return to Silla after victorious battles against Koguryŏ in 551, Kŏ Yŏmbu was accompanied by a friendly Koguryŏ monk named Hyeryŏng. The two had apparently become close friends during previous battles in Koguryŏ. After their return, King Chinhŭng appointed Hyeryŏng to Silla's highest Buddhist office and instituted Buddhist services and lectures later held at the Hwangyŏng temple.[38] Yi Chŏnggi also believes that Hwangyŏng itself was founded in response to a request, by Hyeryŏng, that Silla's victorious campaigns against Koguryŏ be thus commemorated. My own (Sonoda) view is that Silla's acquisition of the lower Han River basin in 552 opened up a channel of direct contact with China, accounting for an increasingly deep and wide range of Chinese cultural influence on Silla toward the end of the sixth century, just when Buddhism was being introduced to Japan.

The routes by which both northern and southern Chinese Buddhism reached Japan are shown in Figure 7.1.

SOGA BUDDHISM

An examination of the channels, conditions, and timing of the Korean acceptance of Buddhism – first in Koguryŏ located closest to China, and then in Paekche and Silla farther away – suggests that Yamato would be the next state to accept Buddhism and that its first Buddhist teachers, statues, and scriptures would come from Paekche. An article on Yamato in an early Chinese source, describing late-sixth and early-

38 Ri Kihaku, "Kōryū-ji to sono sōken," in Tamura and Chin, eds., *Shiragi to Nihon kodai bunka*, p. 18.

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seventh-century conditions in that distant land, states that the Japanese "revered Buddhist teachings, obtained Buddhist scriptures from Paekche, and came to have a written language for the first time."[39]

Early decades

Although we have reliable historical and archaeological evidence that large Buddhist temples were built in the Yamato capital of the Asuka region during the closing years of the sixth century, we have only spotty information, and little consensus, on the timing and circumstances of the earlier introduction and spread of that imported faith. From the extant sources, which are secondary and fragmentary, two conflicting theories have been formulated. The first, based on entries in the *Nihon shoki,* is that Buddhism was introduced to the Yamato court in 552, the thirteenth year of the Kimmei reign. The second, based on an early history of Yamato's first great temple (the Asukadera) entitled the *Gangō-ji engi,* claims that it was introduced in 538, the fifty-fifth year of the Chinese sexagenary cycle that began in 484.

The *Nihon shoki* account states that King Sŏngmyŏng of Paekche sent to King Kimmei of Yamato an envoy bearing Buddhist images and scriptures and that a message from Sŏngmyŏng recommended the adoption of Buddhism on the grounds that this religion had greatly benefited the rulers of other lands. The Yamato court ministers were divided on the issue of adoption, and so finally Kimmei had Soga no Iname, who favored adoption, perform Buddhist rituals experimentally. The experiment was followed by an epidemic that Soga opponents attributed to the displeasure of the native kami. Accordingly, Kimmei had the statues cast into the Naniwa Canal and a recently constructed Buddhist pagoda burned to the ground. The chronicle item concludes with the report that, on that day, winds blew and rain fell under a clear sky.[40]

A critical study of this account reveals two serious flaws. First, questions are raised about the envoy who was reportedly dispatched from Paekche: His name does not appear in any other source of that day; no other person from the "western section" appears in the *Nihon shoki* until after 655; and there is no other reference to such a high Paekche official (with the rank of *takol*) coming to Japan in the sixth century.[41] Second, the Buddhist texts presented to Kimmei were

39 Wo-kuo, "Tungg-i chuan," *Sui shu,* fascicle 81.
40 Kimmei, 13/10, NKBT 68.100–3; Aston, 2.65–67.
41 Ikeuchi, *Man–Sen shi kenkyū,* 1.356–7; NKBT 68.554.

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based, according to studies by Iida Takesato and Fujii Akitaka, on the *Chin-kuang-ming-tsui-shen-wang-ching*, which was not translated into Chinese until 703.[42] Noting this second flaw, Inouye Kaoru observed that Dōji, a Buddhist priest who went to China in 702 and returned in 718, brought back a copy of the recent translation that the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* had seen.[43] Historians are therefore in general agreement that the *Nihon shoki* item concerning the introduction of Buddhism contains additions and embellishments made by later editors. And yet it cannot be denied that King Sŏngmyŏng of Paekche actually sent Buddhist images and texts to the Yamato king around the middle of the sixth century and that this was an important event in the early history of Japanese Buddhism.

The *Gangō-ji engi*, thought to have been compiled a few decades earlier than the *Nihon shoki* and to have been less affected by an urge to glorify the imperial line, provides independent support for key points: that a presentation of Buddhist statues and scriptures was indeed made by the king of Paekche, that the presentation was followed by a conflict over its acceptance, and that Soga no Iname favored the official adoption of Buddhism. Finally, this source adds support to the theory that Buddhism was introduced to Japan in 538 rather than in 552.[44]

Many scholars have examined the *Gangō-ji engi* and other early texts, developing theories about their composition, dating, and reliability. In regard to when Buddhism was first introduced to the Yamato court by King Sŏngmyŏng, they can agree only that it occurred sometime between 538 and 552. But textual analyses, together with the study of early Buddhist history in the three kingdoms of Korea and reflections about the significance of a ruler's patronage of a world religion,[45] are helping us gain a clearer understanding of two knotty

42 Iida Takesato, *Nihon shoki tsūshaku* (Tokyo: Unebi shobō, 1940), vol. 4, pp. 2748–49; Fujii Akitaka, "Kimmei-ki no Bukkyō denrai no kiji ni tsuite," *Shigaku zasshi* 36 (August 1925): 71–74.

43 Inoue Kaoru, *Nihon kodai no seiji to shūkyō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961), pp. 189–232.

44 The tendency to consider 538 as the year in which the Paekche king sent Buddhist statues and texts to Yamato has led a number of historians to ask why the *Nihon shoki* gives the date 552. One rather convincing theory is that 552 was calculated to be the 1,501st year since the death of Śākyamuni, the first year of the third and final Buddhist age of deterioration (*mappō*). Tamura Enchō found that Chinese Buddhists had long believed this final age would soon begin, or had already begun, and that Dōji (who returned to Japan in 718) transmitted such views to Japan. Still another theory is that the discrepancy between 538 and 552 (fourteen years apart) is based on two ideas about the beginning of the Sŏngmyŏng reign: 513 or 527, also a difference of fourteen years.

45 A thoughtful study has been made by Yuasa Yasuo, *Kodaijin no seishin sekai*, vol. 1 of *Rekishi to Nihonjin* (Kyoto: Mineruba shobō, 1980). Tsuji Zennosuke's views on the transmission of Buddhism to Japan have long been accepted; see his *Nihon Bukkyō shi: jōsei hen* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1944), pp. 33–43, 45.

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historical questions: Why were the Soga and other clans divided over the acceptance of Buddhism until the Soga military victory of 587? And why did Buddhism not become a state religion, with imperial patronage, until the Soga defeat in 645?

A divided society

Early texts present a consistent picture of Soga support for Buddhism during that crucial sixth century. The rise of this clan and its connections with the introductions and spread of Buddhism, were outlined in Chapter 3. Here I wish to consider the problem of resistance to the adoption of Buddhism, which is most clearly revealed in (1) two cases of persecution before the Soga victory of 587 and (2) the actions and ideas of Empress Suiko and Prince Shōtoku in the years before the Soga defeat of 645. When studying the resistance issue, we are faced with a paucity of evidence that is often contradictory, but we are beginning to see that Japan was then divided, as Paekche had been, by two fundamentally different types of clans: those with chieftains whose spiritual authority flowed from rites honoring the imported worship of Buddha and those with chieftains whose spiritual authority arose from the performance of rites addressing indigenous deities.

This division was not unlike the one that had complicated the introduction and acceptance of Buddhism in Paekche, where kings were heads of the immigrant Puyŏ clan (said to be descendants of the semilegendary founder of Koguryŏ) and performed ancestral rites at tombs, whereas indigenous Han chieftains ruled an agricultural people and performed agricultural rites held at village *sotsu*. So when the royal Puyŏ clan adopted Buddhism, reinforcing its spiritual sacred-lineage authority with the sponsorship of imported rites, the native Han people and their leaders were slow to follow suit.

The unresponsiveness of the Han was not due simply to a dislike of what the immigrant masters did and wanted but, rather, to broad and deep assumptions – arising from an entirely different social and religious situation – concerning the nature of divine power and how that power could be directed to the enrichment of agricultural life. Unlike Koguryŏ, where Buddhism spread rapidly to the lowest levels of society, Paekche's indigenous Han people, being locked into a primitive agricultural ritual system, never fully accepted the authority of the Puyŏ kings and probably never permitted Buddhism to permeate the life of its villages. Such social and religious polarity helps us understand why Buddhism was not adopted by the Paekche kings until more

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than a century after the arrival of the first Buddhist monk from China. According to the *Samguk sagi*, the first priest to arrive in Paekche was sent by the Chinese court of Eastern Chin in 384, but Buddhism was not adopted by a Paekche king until the reign of Muryŏng (501–23), over 150 years later.

Roughly the same kind of sociopolitical division existed in Japan. On its native side, kings rose above the clan federations in which the divine authority of all leaders, from village heads to Yamato kings, flowed from their roles as priests of agricultural rites. To be sure, clan chieftains and Yamato kings were increasingly preoccupied with ways of emphasizing the divinity of their particular lines of descent, but the core of the native ritual system was agricultural in character. On the immigrant side of the division, leaders were heads of clans who had come to Japan with advanced techniques for constructing tombs and buildings, making tools and weapons, and managing imperial estates and governmental affairs. The Soga, gradually achieving a position of dominance in this immigrant segment of society, also took the lead in introducing and supporting Buddhism.

Whereas the immigrant Soga chieftains were undergirding their spiritual authority by sponsoring Buddhist rites held at temples (*tera*), the Yamato kings and Japanese emperors from the native segment of society were achieving spiritual authority from their roles as chief priests for the worship of agricultural kami at shrines (*jinja*). By appreciating the broad socioreligious differences between these two segments of society in sixth-century Japan, we can see that resistance to Buddhism did not arise simply from personal belief in kami but was rooted in traditional assumptions that community life, and especially the life of its rice plants, was more likely to be enriched if kami rites were performed properly by a community leader: village head, clan chieftain, or Yamato king.

The first *Nihon shoki* reference to the suppression of Buddhism is found in a long entry for the thirteenth year of the reign of Kimmei (552?) about what transpired after the king of Paekche presented a Buddha image and Buddhist sutras and recommended the adoption of the Buddhist religion. The account reports that Soga no Iname, chieftain of the leading immigrant clan, favored its adoption: "All neighboring states to the west already honor Buddha. Is it right that Japan alone should turn its back on this religion?" But two other high ministers, who were chieftains of native clans, were opposed: "The kings of this country have always conducted seasonal rites in honor of the many heavenly and earthly kami of land and grain. If [our king] should now

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honor the kami of neighboring states, we fear that this country's kami would be angered."[46] Although it is now agreed that this account had been subjected to considerable editorial change, these quotations present positions that would logically have been taken by the leaders of the two separate segments of Japanese society: the immigrant clan chieftain maintaining that the king should do what the kings of Korean states had already done, and the native clan chieftains pointing out that a king in Japan had always conducted rites for the various agricultural kami of the land.

A report recorded later in this same account states that Kimmei compromised, ordering Soga no Iname to worship Buddha experimentally. Then a pestilence broke out and Kimmei, apparently fearing that this disaster had occurred because he had not properly performed his priestly role, ordered Buddhist statues thrown into the Naniwa Canal and Buddhist halls burned.[47] But the *Gangō-ji engi* places the first suppression of Buddhism in 569 and links it with the execution of Soga no Iname in the closing months of Kimmei's reign, not with the sudden outbreak of a pestilence. Thus the first suppression of Buddhism seems to have been caused mainly by the death of a Soga leader.

As soon as Iname's son, Soga no Umako, began to regain the position of influence that his father had held, Buddhist worship was revived. In 584, according to the *Nihon shoki*, Umako asked Paekche for two Buddhist images, sent Shiba Tattō around the country looking for Buddhist practitioners, had Tattō's daughter ordained as nun, built a Buddhist hall at the Soga residence where a Miroku statue was enshrined, asked three Buddhist nuns to perform a Buddhist rite there, saw a miraculous sight when handling a Buddha relic, and "practiced Buddhism unremittingly."[48] The same source states in an item of the second month of the following year that the country suffered from another pestilence after which, and on a recommendation made by two ministers who were chieftains of traditional clans, Buddhism was again banned. Buddhist statues as well as a pagoda and Buddha hall were again burned, and three nuns were stripped and flogged.[49] But because the pestilence continued, the emperor permitted Soga no Umako – but no one else – to resume the practice of his faith.[50] The *Gangō-ji engi* reports the same sequence of events but with one significant difference: Instead of pinning the blame on the two anti-Buddhist ministers, as the *Nihon shoki* does, it states that the origina-

46 Kimmei 13/10, NKBT 68.102–3; Aston, 2.66–67. 47 Ibid.
48 Bidatsu 13, NKBT 68.148–9; Aston, 2.101–2.
49 Bidatsu 14/3/1 and 13/3/30, NKBT 68.150–1. 50 Bidatsu 14/6 NKBT 68.151.

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tor of the purge was Emperor Bidatsu himself. As the chief priest of kami worship, he, not his ministers, would have been the logical leader of, and spokesman for, priestly rulers in the native segment of Japanese society. Opponents of Buddhism are also referred to as "the other ministers" (*yoshin*), a term apparently denoting all anti-Buddhist ministers who were chieftains of clans in the traditional segment of society.[51]

Soga authority

A two-stage showdown between the two opposing segments of society came in 587 and 592, as a result of which the Soga clan emerged victorious and Buddhism began to prosper. By the military victory in 587, the chief ministerial opponent of Soga no Umako was killed, and by the court coup in 592 the uncooperative Emperor Sushun was assassinated. The enthronement of Empress Suiko (a Sushun sister who had a Soga mother) in 593 is considered to be the starting point of the Asuka enlightenment, a period when Soga no Umako was in control of state affairs and when China-oriented cultural activity revolved about the Asuka-dera that he had built. Why, then, did not Umako himself occupy the throne as a Chinese victorious general might well have done? And did Empress Suiko really become an active supporter of the Buddhist cause?

Convincing answers to both questions must take into account the conflicting interests and beliefs of Japan's two opposing clan societies: (1) the less populous immigrant clan groups located mainly in and around the capital, enjoying wealth and power arising from an extensive use of imported techniques and learning and associated with the worship of imported Buddhism, and (2) the far more populous native clans scattered throughout the country, engaged largely in agricultural production and the worship of native agricultural kami.

As the highest-ranking clan chieftain in the immigrant segment and the chief sponsor of imported Buddhism, Umako must have concluded that he could not become emperor, a position traditionally held by an imperial son who performed the time-honored role of high priest in the worship of native agricultural kami. He may have decided this because he knew what trouble the royal clan of Paekche had had in ruling that state's native Han people and realized that he, as head of an

51 Hino Akira compared the *Nihon shoki* and *Gangō-ji engi* treatments in his *Nihon kodai no shizoku denshō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata bunshōdō, 1971), pp. 187–207.

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immigrant clan, would never be accepted as the high priest of indigenous kami rites. Even if he had not understood the nature of the problem faced by the royal clan of Paekche, he would have reached the same conclusion by noting fundamental differences between the leadership role in the two segments of Japanese society, recognizing that he could not assume both roles even if he had achieved military supremacy by defeating the strongest native clan and arranging the assassination of an uncooperative emperor.

Imperial authority

The impossibility of joining the two roles cannot be understood without realizing the strength and basic character of the kami worship (Shintoism) that had come to pervade all aspects of life in the native segment of Japanese society. Such worship was, first, carried out by a particular community as a whole and was centered on a pervasive belief that the community could enjoy the benefits of the mysterious life-giving power of its kami only if the kami were honored by a priestly leader – village head, clan chieftain, or state sovereign – who stood closest to, or was possessed by a part of, that particular kami. This three-layered priestly structure, with village heads dominating clan chieftains and a Yamato king standing above the chieftains, had been developing for centuries.

Harada Toshiaki points out that originally a community's priestly head – at the bottom of the structure from which upper layers emerged – was chosen ritually, thereby making certain that the selection was in accord with kami will.[52] Divinely chosen heads at all three levels were believed to administer all community affairs, not just kami rites, as an expression of divine will. Even when clan rule became hereditary, a chieftain was believed to be conducting clan affairs in accord with the will of the clan kami. The development of this priestly system had paralleled the growth of the Yamato kingdom, with each level strengthening and being strengthened by the other. Soga no Umako must have known that because he was not the son of a previous Yamato king and was instead the son of an immigrant clan chieftain, he could not, no matter how much wealth and power he had accumulated, seize the throne and be accepted by kami-worshiping communities as their chief priest.

52 Harada Toshiaki, *Shūkyō to shakai* (Tokyo: Tōkai daigaku shuppankai, 1972).

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Was it also impossible for Empress Suiko, even though she had a Soga mother, to sponsor the worship of Buddha and, at the same time, to serve as the high priestess of kami worship? Until World War II, most Japanese historians tended not to differentiate her support of Buddhism from that of Soga no Umako and Prince Shōtoku. Five references to her support of Buddhism, recorded in the *Nihon shoki*, were then accepted at face value. These stated that she had ordered her ministers to support the Three Treasures and to make copper and embroidered images of Buddha, that she had a Buddhist nunnery built, that she requested Prince Shōtoku to lecture on Buddhist sutras, and that she appointed priestly officials (*sōjō* and *sōzu*) and then ordered them to supervise other Buddhist monks and nuns.[53]

But the *Nihon shoki* also includes an edict that she issued in the fifteenth year of her reign (607) on the subject of her religious responsibilities as a descendant of priestly rulers who honored kami:

> We have heard how our imperial ancestors ruled the land in ancient times. Descending from heaven to earth, they devoutly honored heavenly and earthly kami. They worshiped [kami residing in] mountains and rivers everywhere and were in mysterious communion with heavenly and earthly kami. By performing rites to kami and by worshiping and communing with them in this way, our imperial ancestors harmonized negative and positive forces [*on'yō*] and handled affairs in accord with [those forces and the will of the kami]. Now in our reign nothing should be done to anger the heavenly and earthly kami by the way in which we honor and worship them. So we hereby command that our ministers work together devotedly in the worship of heavenly and earthly kami.[54]

Although the five *Nihon shoki* items about her support of Buddhism say nothing about her playing a priestly role in the worship of Buddha, this edict points directly to her priestly functions in the worship of kami, stating that these had been inherited from her imperial father's ancestors and must be properly performed.

Only recently have historians come to see that it was not the empress but Soga no Umako who was the principal beneficiary of the spiritual authority that flowed from the worship of Buddha. Scholars first began to think of Buddhism in these pre-645 years as Soga Buddhism when their textual analyses of *Nihon shoki* items – especially those dealing with the introduction and early spread of Buddhism – revealed a strong

53 Suiko 2 (594)/2/1, NKBT 68.174–5; Suiko 13 (605)/4/1, NKBT 68.186–7; Suiko 14 (606)/5/5, NKBT 68.186–7; Suiko 14 (606)/7, NKBT 68.188–9; Suiko 32 (624)/4/13, NKBT 68.208–9.

54 Suiko 15 (607)/2/9, NKBT 68.188–9.

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pro-imperial, anti-Soga bias. They soon realized it was natural to find such biases in a work that was compiled several decades after 645 by officials of an imperial government formed in the wake of the Soga defeat, when the government was attempting to extend and deepen an emperor's religious authority by having the Yamato king, not a Soga chieftain, assume the role of chief sponsor and high priest of Buddhism. As Futaba Kenkō pointed out, the compilers apparently added the item about Emperor Kimmei's handing down an imperial edict requiring Soga no Iname to honor Buddhism, as well as the one that Emperor Bidatsu is said to have handed to Soga no Umako.[55] Fukuyama Toshio showed an even more obvious case of purposeful editorializing by comparing the *Nihon shoki*'s and the *Gangō-ji engi*'s treatments of the same event: the arrival of Buddhist relics and Buddhist priests from Paekche soon after Soga no Umako had won his military victory against native clans in 587. The *Nihon shoki* clearly states that these relics and priests were presented to the imperial court, whereas the *Gangō-ji engi* reports that they were brought to Japan in response to a request sent to Paekche, presumably by Soga no Umako.[56]

Soga patronage

But the case for Soga's prominence in the rapid spread of Buddhism after 587 does not rest simply on the minor role played by Empress Suiko. Even the *Nihon shoki* reports leave little doubt that the leading Buddhist temple of the period, the Asuka-dera, was erected by Soga no Umako following a vow he made immediately before winning the military victory of 587.[57] And when that great temple compound was completed in 596, the same chronicle reports that his son was asked to serve as temple commissioner (*tera no tsukasa*).[58]

Inoue Mitsusada observed that the Asuka-dera – whose size and grandeur have been revealed by recent archaeological investigations – is of historical significance on several counts: It was the first large continental-style building ever erected in Japan; it occupied a central position in Japan's first "permanent" capital; and it had a clan-temple (*ujidera*) character common to all temples founded before the Great

55 Kimmei 13 (552?)/10, NKBT 68.102–3; Bidatsu 14 (585?)/2/24, NKBT 68.149; Futaba Kenkō, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata bunshō-dō, 1984), p. 41.

56 Sushun 1 (588)/3, NKBT 68.168–9. This text is compared with that of the *Gangō-ji engi* text in Futaba, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi*, p. 43.

57 Sushun, before enthronement (587)/7, NKBT 68.164–5.

58 Suiko 4 (596)/11, NKBT 68.174–5.

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Reforms of 645 (see Chapter 3). It was, in addition, the centerpiece of an emerging temple system that by 624 included forty-six temples concentrated in and around the Nara basin where the immigrant clans were based. With its imposing statues, great bronze bells, and exotic ceremonies, this temple system – an impressive representation of continental cultural achievement – symbolized the Soga's wealth and power and, at the same time, enhanced the spiritual authority of the Soga chieftain. Futaba concluded that Empress Suiko's less-than-enthusiastic support of Buddhism may have stemmed from her conviction that Soga no Umako was intentionally using the Buddhist system to increase his spiritual authority, planning eventually to overwhelm the imperial clan and make Buddhism a state religion, not just a clan religion in which the Soga head was the chief patron and high priest.[59]

The rapid spread of Buddhism between 587 and 645 was certainly due in large measure to the generous support provided by the immigrant clans, especially the Soga, and to the exotic appeal of Buddhist paraphernalia and ritual, but another contributing factor was the increasingly popular belief that Buddhist rites had a mysterious power to produce spectacular physical benefits. Early Buddhist temples were built around a pagoda (a memorial to Buddha), at the base of which a Buddha bone (*shari*) was commonly placed, making a pagoda something like the inner sanctuary of a shrine where the most sacred object (the *shintai* or kami body) was housed. So at both a Buddhist temple and a Shinto shrine, a particularly potent sacred article was believed to possess an essence of divinity that could, with the appropriate ritual, benefit the human community in substantial and concrete ways.

We find no evidence that Buddha was worshiped at a Soga temple for the purpose of ensuring spiritual enlightenment or rebirth in a Buddhist paradise after death. The *Nihon shoki* tells us that when Soga no Umako himself became ill in 623, a thousand men and women were admitted to the Buddhist priesthood "for his sake."[60] Two decades later, at the time of the terrible drought of 642 when offerings and prayers to kami produced no rain, the Soga minister proposed another type of prayer: the reading of excerpts from Mahayana sutras at Buddhist temples, with the Soga minister himself participating. The report says that because rain fell the next day, the reading of excerpts was discontinued two days after it had been started.[61]

59 Futaba, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi*, p. 44. 60 Suiko 22 (614)/8, NKBT 68.200–1.
61 Kōgyoku 1 (642)7/25, 7/27, 7/28, 7/29, NKBT 68.240–1.

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Prince Shōtoku's Buddhism

Having traced the general outlines of Buddhist development on the immigrant side of Japanese society, and the rise of what has been called Soga Buddhism, we shall turn next to the nature and historical significance of the Buddhism of Prince Shōtoku (574–622), known as the father of Japanese Buddhism. The prince was more clearly a member of the imperial family than was Empress Suiko: He was a son of Emperor Yōmei, had been designated Suiko's successor to the throne, and was her regent. According to the *Nihon shoki,* he was responsible for opening up relations with the Chinese court of Sui, adopting reforms and reform policies, and building a palace and Buddhist temple at some distance from the Asuka region where the Soga's control was centered. In sum, he is depicted as a crown prince and regent who had become, by about the age of thirty, an independently powerful political leader who also lectured on Buddhist scriptures at the imperial court.

Until recently, historians have been generally skeptical about the authenticity of evidence concerning Prince Shōtoku's Buddhist activities, especially after coming to realize that *Nihon shoki* compilers had permitted this chronicle to be colored by their pro-imperial, anti-Soga bias.

But recent archaeological investigations made at the prince's palace in Ikaruga, the nearby Ikaruga-dera (now known as the Hōryū-ji), and the Arahaka-dera in Naniwa (now known as the Shitennō-ji) show that his palace and the two temples associated with him were actually built at places and times indicated in *Nihon shoki* reports (see Chapter 3, this volume). Moreover, historians do not now doubt the veracity of two statements made about his faith. The first, made by his son Prince Yamashiro in 628 when he refused to press his own candidacy for the throne, reads as follows:

> And when my father was dying, he called his children in and said: "Avoid every kind of evil and practice every kind of good." I heard these words and embraced them as my constant rule of life. Although I have personal feelings [about the succession issue], I will therefore be patient and not become angry.[62]

Because the phrase "Avoid every kind of evil and practice every kind of good" appears in Buddhist scripture, Yamashiro's report is thought to be a reflection of what the prince had believed.[63]

The second expression of the prince's Buddhist belief is found in an inscription on an embroidered picture of heaven (*tenjukoku shūchō*)

62 Jomei, Introduction (629), NKBT 68.225–7.

63 Ienaga Saburō, "Shōtoku Taishi no Bukkyō," in Ienaga Saburō, ed., *Kodai hen,* vol. 1 of *Nihon Bukkyō-shi* (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1967), pp. 70–71.

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made by the prince's wife, Tachibana no Iratsume. The picture shows the prince facing his wife and observing, "The world is impermanent; Buddha alone is truth." Although this inscription suggests that the prince understood and accepted this fundamental Buddhist teaching, it is thought that belief in a Buddhist heaven (the subject of the embroidered picture) was held only by his wife.[64]

The third most important piece of evidence concerning Prince Shōtoku's Buddhist ideas and beliefs is found in Articles 2 and 10 of the famous Seventeen Injunctions, commonly referred to by the misleading term "Seventeen-Article Constitution" and recorded in a 604 item of the *Nihon shoki*.[65] As early as the Edo period (1603–1868), a historian maintained that the Seventeen Injunctions had not been written by Prince Shōtoku but by the *Nihon shoki* compilers. And in more recent years the distinguished Tsuda Sōkichi claimed that the injunctions could not have been written before 645, as they included a term for governor (*kokushi*) that was not used until after 645. But recent research has shown that for some years both terms for governor (*kuni no miyatsuko* and *kokushi*) had been used in earlier times. This and related discoveries have largely discredited Tsuda's position. Now it is generally agreed that the injunctions were in accord with the political situation of the early seventh century and that they may well have been composed by Prince Shōtoku.

The second of the Seventeen Injunctions urges the worship of Buddha in these words:

> Sincerely revere the Three Treasures of Buddhism (Buddha, the Law, and the Priesthood). In all four types of life and in all countries [of the world] they are the ultimate truth. Any person of any age should revere Buddhist law. Few persons are really bad. If they are well taught, they will be obedient. But if they are not converted to [the truth of] the Three Treasures, how can their wrongs be corrected?

And the Buddhist portion of the tenth injunction reads:

> [The sutras] say that one should avoid indignation, decry angry looks, and not be angry about differences with others. Every person has a heart, and every heart has its attachments. What is right for others is wrong for us, and what is right for us is wrong for others. We are not necessarily sages, and others are not necessarily fools. Both we and others are ordinary human beings. Who can sharply distinguish between what is bad and what is good?

Although other injunctions, as well as the last part of injunction 10, reflect Chinese Confucianism and Legalism, these two quotations – parts

64 Ibid., p. 71. 65 Suiko 12 (604)/4/3, NKBT 68.180–7; Aston, 2.128–33.

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of which have been traced to particular sutras – reveal that Buddhism too was an important ingredient in the injunctions' ideological mix.

One additional Buddhist source traditionally associated with Prince Shōtoku is the Commentaries on Three Buddhist Sutras (*Sangyō gisho*): the Shōman Sutra, the Yuima Sutra, and the Hokke-kyō or Lotus Sutra. Of the three, the commentary on the Lotus Sutra is said to have been written in the prince's own hand. The first scholar to claim that these commentaries were composed by someone else was Tsuda Sōkichi, who maintained that the prince was not a monk who could have given specialized lectures on the sutras but a regent who was concerned principally with the conduct of state affairs. In short, Tsuda did not consider the commentaries to be valid historical evidence of what the prince thought about Buddhism.

But Hanayama Shinshō's detailed study of the contents of the commentaries on the Lotus and Shōman sutras has led him to agree with the Nara Buddhist who attributed them to the prince. Supporting Hanayama's case was the discovery that only pre-589 sources had been used. Hanayama decided, too, that the commentaries could not have been written by a foreigner, as they had a definite Japanese cast. Although Ienaga Saburō does not think that Shōtoku's authorship has been proved, he believes that Hanayama has made an important contribution by showing that these commentaries reflect Chinese Buddhist thought during the period of China's Southern and Northern courts (420 to 589).[66]

What does such evidence tell us about Prince Shōtoku's Buddhist ideas and beliefs? The answers given by historians range widely between those of Tsuda, who did not consider the prince a serious Buddhist thinker, to those of Ienaga, who believes that the prince not only understood and accepted the most basic Buddhist teachings but was the first Japanese to grasp the Buddhist doctrine of denial (*hitei no ronri*) by which the truth of anything impermanent – that is, anything but Buddha – is denied. Ienaga's interpretation, though not yet generally accepted,[67] is appealing and provocative.[68]

66 Ienaga, "Shōtoku Taishi no Bukkyō," pp. 73–75. Ten ancient Chinese scrolls have been identified as commentaries on the Shōman Sutra written during the period of the Northern Court. The one referred to as the E Text is remarkably similar to the Shōman commentary in the *Sangyō gisho*. Fujieda Akira has compared the two and finds roughly 70 percent of the wording identical and the general thrust of the interpretations the same; "Shōman-gyō gisho," Ienaga Saburō, Fujieda Akira, Hayashima Kyōshō, and Tsukishima Hiroshi, eds., *Shōtoku Taishi shū*, vol. 2 of *Nihon shisō taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 484–544.

67 Although Futaba has reservations about certain points, he generally accepts Ienaga's thesis and reviews the positions taken by other Buddhist scholars; see his *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi*, pp. 84–101.

68 Outlined in his "Shōtoku Taishi no Bukkyō," pp. 64–81.

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Ienaga concluded that Prince Shōtoku's acceptance of the Buddhist doctrine of denial developed gradually after about 604, when it is thought the Seventeen Injunctions were written. Before that the prince seems to have devoted his energies mainly to such administrative tasks as restoring control over Mimana (Kaya) and modernizing the bureaucracy. But the two injunctions just quoted reveal an emerging commitment to the Buddhist denial of truth in any worldly phenomenon, including the state and one's own self. Unfortunately, nothing remains of what the prince wrote in the closing years of his life, but the statement attributed to him on his wife's embroidered banner (the *tenjukoku shūchō*) suggests that he had come to embrace the Buddhist doctrine of denial. His son Prince Yamashiro may have had an even deeper conversion, leading Ienaga to say that with Yamashiro we have a model of humanity restoration (*ningen-sei kaifuku*) by which an individual is willing to give his own life for the welfare of ordinary people living in this mundane world. And here, says Ienaga, the Japanese – who had not until then been able to rise above the narrow thoughts and beliefs of a closed agricultural society – made their first great leap into a new spiritual world.[69]

Although the prince is seen as a solitary thinker who was not well understood by his contemporaries and whose ideas about the truth of Buddha were not greatly appreciated until centuries later, he was an important figure in the history of Japanese Buddhism. He not only founded the Ikaruga temple, which was central to the Buddhism of Asuka times, but in 608 he sent to China four student priests who, according to the Chinese dynastic history of Sui, were intent on studying Buddhist law. When these young priests returned to Japan, usually after a stay of ten or more years, they not only gave seventh-century Japanese Buddhism its special character but zealously introduced many non-Buddhist skills. Under their leadership, Japan gradually turned its attention from the Buddhism introduced from Koguryŏ and Paekche to the Buddhism of the reunified Chinese empire of Sui and T'ang. Finally, one cannot help but see Prince Shōtoku as a forerunner, if not the forefather, of such thirteenth-century Buddhist reform thinkers as Shinran (1173–1262) who affirmed a truth that transcended everything in this polluted physical world.

Toward state Buddhism

But where did Prince Shōtoku stand in the old conflict between the indigenous communities headed by kings and emperors (the chief

69 Ibid.

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priests of kami worship) and the immigrant communities headed by clan chieftains (the principal patrons of Buddha worship)? Although this question has been studied and debated for years, historians still disagree on whether the prince was concerned primarily with the building of a strong state, with the implications of Buddhist law, or with the formation of state Buddhism. Inoue Mitsusada thinks that the Seventeen Injunctions (thought to have been written by the prince) were essentially rules and regulations for officials to follow in exercising absolute obedience to the emperor and that Buddhism was injected, in a somewhat minor position below Confucianism and Shintoism, as an ideological support (see Chapter 3). Ienaga, on the other hand, sees the injunctions mainly as expressions of the prince's commitment to the ultimate truth of Buddha, a truth transcending the affairs of state and the individual self. Futaba Kenkō too feels that the prince was not thinking of Buddhism as a support of state power but as a world religion for all states, one that should be accepted by all rulers and all peoples.[70]

With respect to the two socioreligious segments of Japanese society (Buddhist immigrant clans headed by a Soga chieftain and Shintoistic indigenous clans by Empress Suiko), Prince Shōtoku occupied a fairly strong position in both: He was an ardent supporter of Buddhism who resided in Ikaruga, an immigrant-clan power base located some distance from the Asuka capital, and he was also, as crown prince, slated to follow Empress Suiko as the country's highest-ranking conductor of kami worship. But his religious interests, his sense of the locus and character of spiritual authority, differed from those of either Soga no Umako or Empress Suiko.

Soga Buddhism was closely identified with rites that were believed to provide miraculous and mysterious physical benefits here and now. Rites carried out at Buddhist temples were therefore not unlike those traditionally held at Shinto shrines. But because Buddhist worship was bound up with the use of exotic paraphernalia imported from culturally advanced lands, it was believed to generate truly wonder-working magic, explaining why Buddhism was spreading rapidly in and around the Soga's power base and strengthening the spiritual authority of the leading patron, Soga no Umako. Probably, however, the spiritual side of Soga authority was enhanced even more by the way that the impressive Buddhist paraphernalia (especially temples, statues, and bells) symbolized both the physical and the spiritual authority of the Soga leader. Before Umako's time, kingly authority

70 Futaba, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi*, p. 6.

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seems to have been symbolized mainly by huge mounds erected for the burial of deceased kings. But great temple compounds like the Asuka-dera must have symbolized, and thereby generated, far greater authority than a burial mound did, helping us understand why burial mounds gradually became smaller and less significant after Umako's day.

Japanese historians frequently ask whether Soga no Umako was attempting to establish state Buddhism. Inoue Mitsusada thinks that he started to move in that direction as soon as he defeated his opponents in the civil war of 587. For Inoue, Soga Buddhism was therefore state Buddhism, and Asuka-dera was the first state temple. But Futaba Kenkō maintains that Umako was simply using Buddhism to strengthen his own authority, not that of the imperial court. For Futaba, then, Umako may have been thinking ahead to the establishment of state Buddhism but had taken only the first step in 587. The second step was not taken by a Soga chieftain but by the emperor who ascended the throne after the Soga defeat in 645. In the light of the Paekche model (Buddha-worshiping immigrant leaders ruling over the indigenous, community-centered people of Han) and of the fact that Buddhist institutions of Asuka Japan were essentially clan temples (*ujidera*), we can conclude that Soga no Umako thought of himself as the high priest and major beneficiary of rites held at Buddhist temples. He must have considered all temples of the Asuka period, even those founded by Prince Shōtoku, as units of a particularistic Soga-supporting religious system. If he looked forward to the establishment of state Buddhism, he must have seen a Soga state, not a state ruled by a high priest or priestess of kami worship.

What did Empress Suiko and Prince Shōtoku think about this issue? Empress Suiko seems to have been preoccupied with her role as high priestess of kami worship; as far as we know she did not found a single Buddhist temple or conduct a single Buddhist rite. On the other hand, her designated successor, Prince Shōtoku, is said to have founded two Buddhist temples, lectured at the court on Buddhist sutras, and embraced the basic Buddhist denial of permanence, or truth, in this physical world. Moreover, he is thought of as the author of the Seventeen Injunctions, which enjoined state officials to serve obediently one emperor and to revere the Three Treasures of Buddhism.

Historians do not yet agree on the question of how the prince related his Buddhist convictions to his vision of an imperial state. Whereas Tamura Enchō insists that the prince approached Buddhism as an individual believer and had no intention of relating Buddhism to the

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state,[71] Futaba disagrees. Largely accepting Ienaga's views on the nature of the prince's Buddhist convictions, Futaba argues that the second of the Seventeen Injunctions (reverence for Buddhism as the supreme faith of all countries) made Buddhism not only the primary ideological support for other injunctions but also the religious truth by which an emperor (presumably a Buddhist convert) could rule effectively. Thus he sees the second injunction on reverence for Buddhism as a precondition for the third injunction on obedience to imperial commands.[72]

Although Futaba's thesis seems to have greater merit than do those of other known writers on the subject, the picture will still be blurred if we disregard the ideological significance of the third injunction on obedience to imperial commands, which reads as follows:

> Scrupulously obey imperial rescripts [*mikotonori*]. The emperor [*kimi*] is Heaven and his ministers are Earth: Heaven overspreads and Earth upholds. By having [the affairs of state] conducted in accordance with [the demands of] the four seasons, [benefits] will be obtained from the operation of innumerable divine forces. But when Earth overspreads Heaven, [the world] is ruined. Therefore [good] ministers must accept imperial commands: When actions are taken on high, those below must comply. So edicts handed down by the emperor must be scrupulously obeyed. If they are not obeyed, [ministers] will bring ruin upon themselves.[73]

Although this injunction contains Confucian phrases and ideas, its basic thrust is clear: The emperor is the highest authority of the land.

This authority is not explicitly related to the traditional role of a ruler who, as chief priest of kami rites, is descended from a long line of priestly rulers. But neither is that authority rooted explicitly in Confucian virtue or Buddhist truth. So why is it not logical for the prince to have assumed, without articulation, that an emperor possessed the highest authority simply because Japanese emperors had always had such authority? If such an assumption lay behind the formulation of the third injunction, we can properly think of that injunction as standing at the top of a three-tiered ideological structure: Confucianism principles of ministerial behavior at the bottom (Injunction 1), reverence for Buddha as the supreme object of worship in all lands on a higher and more sacred tier (Injunction 2), and traditional imperial authority at a top spot near Heaven (Injunction 3).

71 Tamura Enchō, "Shōtoku Taishi no jidai to sono Bukkyō," *Shōtoku Taishi ronshū*, cited in Futaba, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi*, p. 45.

72 Futaba, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi*, pp. 48–51.

73 Suiko 12 (604) 14/3, NKBT 68.180–1, translated somewhat differently in Aston, 2.129.

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Such an interpretation of the way that Prince Shōtoku related his Buddhist convictions to Japanese imperial rule, when seen against the backdrop of a divided society with different sources of spiritual authority, helps us understand why both Soga no Emishi and Soga no Iruka (Umako's son and grandson) were violently opposed to Prince Yamashiro's occupying the throne. They must have realized that this son of Shōtoku, apparently more committed to the Buddhist cause than his father was, would surely draw sacred Buddhist authority to the emperor and away from the current chieftain of the Soga clan. Accordingly, Yamashiro and his family were brutally eliminated, an event that kindled a coup by which the Soga themselves were destroyed. The emperor (Kōtoku) who was placed on the throne then began to patronize Buddhism, as Shōtoku seems to have wanted.

The prince's apparent advocacy of imperial patronage for Buddhism – no doubt based on the assumption that imperial patronage of the foreign faith would further justify and sanctify imperial rule – explains why court leaders arranged the assassination of Soga no Emishi (who was concerned mainly with the Soga's authority) in 645, why they moved quickly to bring Buddhist priests and temples under imperial authority, why reform measures were announced by imperial edict, and why Prince Shōtoku soon came to be honored (eventually worshiped) as a great hero of the imperial line. The Buddhism that was supported by the state after 645 was not, however, the prince's type of Buddhism (centered on the doctrine of denial), but a Soga form that stressed magic and ceremonies honoring deceased ancestors.

RITSURYŌ BUDDHISM

After eliminating Soga no Emishi in 645, the leaders of the new administration adopted reforms that led to the formation of a Chinese-style penal and administrative structure referred to as the *ritsuryō* state. Legal and political measures taken to increase the emperor's autocratic power and authority were paralleled by endeavors to make Buddhism a state religion: Buddhist temples and Buddhist worship were used in support of the ruler's authority, similarly to what was done earlier in China and Korea. The actions taken in those years to sever established Buddhist temples from Soga patronage and to place them under the wing of emperors and empresses mark the beginning of what is known as the period of *ritsuryō* Buddhism.

Ties between political and religious change after 645 were so deep and extensive that the truth of contemporary historical movements is

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obscured by attempts to separate one from the other. Therefore, when tracing the course of Buddhist history between the coup of 645 and the removal of the capital to Nara in 710, it is appropriate to identify the principal Buddhist currents with two political administrations: one set up around the future Emperor Tenji after the coup of 645, and the other formed around Tenji's brother Emperor Temmu (d. 686) after the civil war of 672. Moreover, the leaders of these administrations, like the imperial predecessors of past generations, were the chief priests of kami worship. Even as they became involved in controlling and promoting the imported Buddhist faith, they seemed to realize that the primary source of their spiritual authority lay in their hereditary roles as high priests of native kami worship. Thus even a cursory outline of Buddhism, particularly in this ancient period, will be distorted if we ignore its connections with administrative affairs or kami worship.

Tenji's ritsuryō Buddhism

A keynote of the new administration was struck just a few days after Soga no Iruka's death in 645 when, according to the *Nihon shoki*, members of the imperial family and their ministers assembled and swore an oath that under heaven there is only one imperial way. Other pronouncements made in those early days before the reforms were announced suggest that the worship of kami still had a very high priority. When messengers were sent to governors of the eastern provinces to announce the emperor's intention to regulate the affairs of those provinces, the imperial message they carried began with these words: "In accordance with the charge entrusted to me by the heavenly kami . . ."[74] Clearly, Emperor Kōtoku intended not just to rule the state directly in the Chinese manner but also to function more positively than ever as Japan's chief priest of kami worship. Just three days after sending his reform message to the governors of eastern provinces, the emperor sent off another messenger to the "great Buddhist temple"[75] where priests and nuns were assembled to hear the following pronouncement:

74 Kōtoku 1 (645) /8/5 NKBT 68.273; Aston, 2.200.

75 This temple is thought by some to have been the Asuka-dera founded by Soga no Umako soon after seizing control of state affairs in 587 and 593. But others think it was the Kudara Taiji (the Great Paekche Temple) founded, according to the *Nihon shoki*, by Emperor Jomei in 639 and later named the Daian-ji. An account of the history of the Daian-ji says that the golden halls and pagoda of the Kudara Taiji were soon burned down and that the temple was rebuilt in 642 by Empress Kōgyoku and renamed the Daian-ji (the Great Peace Temple). Kudara Taiji is considered the first Buddhist temple founded by an occupant of the throne. See Ienaga, *Nihon Bukkyō shi*, 1.92–93.

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In the thirteenth year of the reign of Kimmei (552?), [the imperial court] received Buddhist law from King Songmyŏng of Paekche, but the ministers rejected it. Soga no Iname alone was a believer, and by imperial order he was made to practice Buddhism. During the reign of Emperor Bidatsu, Soga no Umako followed his father in practicing the faith, placing high value on its teachings. But other ministers were not believers, and the religion almost disappeared. Then Emperor Bidatsu ordered Soga no Umako to honor Buddhist law. Later on and in response to Empress Suiko's orders, Soga no Umako had artisans make an embroidered figure of Buddha that was sixteen feet high, as well as a bronze statue of Buddha that was sixteen feet high. He also upheld the teachings of Buddha and honored Buddhist priests and nuns.

Futaba and other historians are inclined to think that these first sentences of the edict, dealing with the role of earlier emperors and Empress Suiko, were revised by the *Nihon shoki*'s editors in order to make it appear that the early sovereigns were more ardent supporters of Buddhism than they actually were. It is now felt that before 645 no occupant of the throne, including Empress Suiko and Empress Kōgyoku, had actively patronized or become involved in Buddhist worship.

But the last part of the edict contains orders for implementing an entirely new policy toward Buddhism, one that emphasized imperial control and imperial patronage:

It is our desire to have true Buddhist teachings brilliantly honored. So we appoint the following [ten] Buddhist masters . . . Emmyō [the last-named master] is also appointed chief priest of the Kudara-dera. The ten Buddhist masters [*totari no nori no shi*] are to give special attention to teaching and guiding all other Buddhist priests and to making certain that Buddhist teachings are practiced in accordance with the law. If anyone below the emperor down through the provincial governors has problems handling the administration of a temple, he is to receive assistance from us. Temple commissioners [*tera no tsukasa*] and chief temple priests [*tera shu*] will be appointed. They are to visit temples, ascertain the conditions of priests and nuns and slaves, assess the productivity of temple fields, and make full reports to the throne.[76]

Immediately following the text of this edict, the *Nihon shoki* carries a report of three secular officials' being appointed Buddhist superintendents (*hōzu*). Both the *hōzu* and the ten Buddhist masters had their counterparts in T'ang China. But a particularly strong Chinese influence seems to have been exerted by the ten Buddhist masters. At least four of them had recently returned to Japan from several years of

76 Kōtoku 1 (645) 8/8 NKBT 68.276–77; Aston, 2.202–3.

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study at Chinese temples (see Chapter 3). These China-trained masters, appointed by an edict handed down by the emperor, were at the forefront of a movement to transform Soga Buddhism into state Buddhism of the type currently flourishing in China and Korea.[77]

Because the patronage and worship of Buddha were now transferred from the head of the immigrant Soga clan to an emperor whose authority arose mainly from his position as the chief priest of kami worship, Japanese Buddhism after 645 was more like the Buddhism of Silla than like that of Paekche. As we noted in the first section of this chapter, the kings of Silla had emerged from clusters of priestly rulers of agricultural villages, not from an immigrant clan as in Paekche. Silla was then becoming the most powerful Korean state, one with especially close ties to the T'ang empire. Moreover, many of Japan's China-trained priests had returned home by way of Silla. So even though the T'ang character of Japan's *ritsuryō* Buddhism is unmistakable, we should not overlook the direct influence of increasingly powerful Silla kings who were reinforcing their sacred authority with the worship of Buddha.

But the substitution of imperial control for Soga control did not mean that the Soga preference for Buddhist magic had been rejected. Even though Prince Shōtoku had been a prominent member of the imperial clan, the post-645 reformers were not influenced as much by the prince's universalistic humanism as by Buddhist forms that were then popular in China and Korea where Buddhism prospered, mainly in magical forms, as a support for the state. During the pre-645 reign of Emperor Jomei, a priest trained in China had lectured on the Muryōju Sutra,[78] but after 645 the new leaders seem not to have been particularly interested in Buddhist teachings, devoting their attention instead to Buddhist practices that promised this-worldly benefits: holding masses (*hōe*) at court, making Buddhist images, preparing Buddhist meals, and conducting the colorful "burning-of-lamps" (*nentō*) rite. When Emperor Tenji became seriously ill in 660, the *Nihon shoki* states that one hundred Buddhist images were dedicated at court and that the emperor personally sent messengers to make valuable offerings to Buddha.[79]

77 Ienaga, *Nihōn Bukkyō shi*, 1.95.

78 This was one of the three Pure Land Sutras, often referred to as the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha. It describes the Pure Land paradise, traces the rise of Amida Buddha, and explains how human beings attain Buddhahood in the Pure Land by invoking the name of Buddha. *Japanese–English Buddhist Dictionary* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1965), pp. 203–4.

79 Tenji 10 (660) 10/8 NKBT 68.378–9.

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Temmu's imperial system

After winning the civil war of 672, Emperor Temmu – faced by the danger of further internal disruption and the continued expansion of China and Silla – moved first to maintain and strengthen his control. But in building his "imperial system," he seems to have given more attention to increasing his spiritual authority than to increasing his physical authority. His endeavors in the area of kami worship included upgrading the Ise Shrine where the ancestral kami of the imperial house (the Sun Goddess) was worshiped, highlighting the emperor's role as chief priest for the worship of kami at shrines all over Japan, and compiling chronicles that would justify and sanctify the position of emperors as direct descendants of the Sun Goddess (see Chapter 3). Here I (Brown) will sketch only what Temmu did in the Buddhist area. But the reader should be reminded that as devoted as Temmu was to the Buddhist faith, he seems always to have been aware that his position as emperor was based primarily on his ancient role as high priest of kami worship, and only secondarily on his role as chief patron of Buddhism.

Temmu had occupied the throne only a short time when he initiated the practice of having Buddhist scriptures read at the Kawara-dera, issued an edict that animals be set free (*hōjō*) in the provinces, paid stipends to Buddhist priests and nuns, held Buddhist retreats (*ango*) at the imperial palace, and generally demonstrated that he was sponsoring Buddhism in a new way. Some say that he was also revealing his deep personal belief in Buddhist teachings.

As early as the second year of his reign (673) Temmu handed down an order that the old Takechi no Ō-dera, the first temple built by an emperor,[80] be called the Great Official Temple (Daikan Daiji). As we know from archaeological remains, this Great Official Temple had a nine-storied pagoda comparable to the seven-storied pagoda later built at Tōdai-ji, further supporting the view that Temmu meant this temple to be the centerpiece of a new Buddhist system that would add luster to his spiritual authority. From that central temple, Buddhist ceremonies and institutions spread to outlying regions. By 677, lectures were being held in the provinces on Buddhist sutras known as

80 This temple had several names (including Daian-ji) and may have been the old Kudara-dera built by Soga no Umako, subsequently moved and renamed; see Ienaga, *Nihon Bukkyō shi*, 1.97.

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the "state protecting sutras": the Golden Light (Konkōmyō-kyō) and Benevolent Kings (Ninnō-kyō).[81]

The prominence of these two sutras in the development of *ritsuryō* Buddhism after the time of Temmu was due mainly to their promises of protection for states and their leaders. As DeVisser pointed out, the Golden Light Sutra's sixth chapter is the principal reason that the sutra was so highly regarded. There we read that "the Four Deva Kings, the Guardians of the World, promise with all their numberless followers (demons and spirits) to protect the kings (together with their families and countries), who attentively listen to this *sutra* and respectfully make offerings, receiving and keeping this holy text."[82] Likewise, the contents of the Benevolent Kings Sutra and its use after Temmu's time indicate that its importance was rooted in the teachings of the fifth chapter, whose principal subject is again the protection of states and in which Tathagata addresses kings as follows:

> There were in former times 5000 kings of countries, who always read this *sutra*, and who in their present life have got their reward. In the same way you, sixteen Great Kings, must practice the Rite of Protecting the Country, and you must obey, read and explain this *sutra*. If in future ages the kings of countries wish to protect their kingdoms and their own bodies, they too must act in the same way.[83]

These two sutras contained the basic doctrines of *ritsuryō* Buddhism and continued to be honored throughout the Nara period.

In 685, one year before his death, Emperor Temmu issued orders that were clearly meant to extend the emerging state temple system, centered at the Great Official Temple at the capital, to outlying provinces. On the twenty-seventh day of the third month of that year, he issued this short edict: "Buddhist chapels are to be built in every house of the several provinces; Buddhist images and Buddhist sutras are to be placed therein; and Buddha is to be worshiped and offerings

81 The Golden Light Sutra (the Suvarṇa-prabhāsa, T.663) was first translated into Chinese at the beginning of the fifth century. It was used in Japan until the Shōmu reign, when an early eighth-century translation (known in Japanese as the Golden Light Most Successful King Sutra, or the Konkōmyō saishō-ō-kyō) was favored. The latter was the Suvarṇa-prabhāsattama-rāja, Nanjō 126. See M. W. DeVisser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan: Sutras and Ceremonies in Use in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries* A.D. *and Their History in Later Times* (Leiden: Brill, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 14–16 and vol. 2, pp. 431–88.

The Benevolent King Sutra (the Kāruṇikā-rāja-prajnāpāramitā, T.245), according to the *Nihon shoki*, was the subject of a mass (the Ninnō-hannya e) held in 660; Saimei 6 (660 5, NKBT 68.343. But only after Temmu's reign were copies sent to the provinces. See DeVisser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, 2.116–89.

82 Ibid., 2.434. 83 Ibid., 1.134–5.

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made."[84] The term "every house" (*ie goto ni*) apparently denoted the houses of aristocrats and officials residing in the provinces, not just those closely connected with the central government.[85] Temmu's consort and successor to the throne, Empress Jitō, continued to promote Buddhism in the Temmu fashion. In the eighth year of her reign (694), she sent one hundred copies of the Golden Light Sutra to each of the provinces and issued a command that the sutra be read during the first month of every year.[86] But the Buddhist system did not reach its highest point of development until more than fifty years later.

Although Temmu seems to have been preoccupied with rites that would benefit the state, he also relied on the mysterious power of Buddhism to cure human ailments, particularly his own and those of his immediate family. The most notable example of his interest in the power of the healing Buddha Yakushi is reported in a *Nihon shoki* item for the year 680: "On the 12th day [of this 11th month], the Empress became ill. First the construction of the Yakushi-ji temple was started; then one hundred persons were ordained as Buddhist priests. As a result [of taking these steps] the Empress got better."[87] Although Temmu died before the Yakushi-ji was completed, Empress Jitō had its construction continued. In 698, dedication services were held for the temple's sacred object of worship, a statue of three Buddhist deities known as the Yakushi triad.

Excavations at the Yakushi-ji site in Fujiwara show that its layout was new: In front of a golden hall were two pagodas, one to the east of a north–south line running from the southern gate and another to the west of that line. But the Yakushi-ji and two other temples, the Great Official Temple (later called the Daian-ji) and the Asuka-dera, were moved from Fujiwara to Heijō (now Nara) after the latter became the capital in 710. Historians feel that Yakushi-ji's original golden hall and two pagodas may have been substantially altered during the move. If not, the present-day eastern pagoda of the Yakushi-ji, as well as the Yakushi triad, are truly valued treasures of the pre-Nara (Hakuhō) period.

The Buddha teachings honored at Yakushi-ji were undoubtedly those of the Yakushi Sutra, although that sutra was not mentioned in Japanese chronicles until 686, when Temmu became ill. A *Nihon shoki* item for that year reports that when the emperor became sick, priests were asked to expound on the Yakushi Sutra at the Kawara-dera – not

84 Temmu 14 (685)3/27, NKBT 68.468–69; Aston, 2.369. 85 Ienaga, *Nihon Bukkyō shi*, 1.98.
86 Jitō 8 (694) 5/11, NKBT 68.525. 87 Temmu 9 (680) 11/12, NKBT 68.443–5; Aston, 2.348.

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the Yakushi-ji – and to hold a Buddhist retreat at the imperial palace.[88] The contents of the Yakushi Sutra indicate why the emperor should have turned to it at a time of personal crisis, for it tells of a perfect Buddha of Healing (Yakushi Nyorai), unsurpassed in wisdom, who vowed to bless individuals on the path to Buddhahood. The seventh vow must have been especially appealing, for there Yakushi promises to help "all ill and helpless sentient beings to achieve recovery, to be blessed with peace and joy of body and mind, to become wealthy, and to obtain the state of enlightenment by hearing his name."[89] When looking at the the Yakushi triad that has come down to us from that day, one can easily see that this splendid symbolization of the healing Buddha (flanked by two attendant bodhisattvas of the sun and moon)[90] might well convince a worshiper that as he heard the teachings of Yakushi Sutra and gazed at this magnificent statue of the healing Buddha, he would indeed achieve recovery. Unfortunately, Emperor Temmu did not recover. But belief in the mysterious power of the healing Buddha – an important aspect of *ritsuryō* Buddhism – continued to spread and prosper, coloring Japanese religious life in subsequent periods of history.

Buddhism controlled by law

State control of Buddhist priests and temples, a central theme of early edicts issued by Emperor Tenji, was also urged by his successors. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that an entire section of the Taihō administrative code, promulgated in 701, was devoted to Buddhist monks and nuns. If earlier codes (the Ōmi civil code said to have been completed in 668 during the Tenji reign, and the Asuka no Kiyomihara civil and penal codes promulgated during the 680s in Temmu's reign) had been preserved, we would have a clearer picture of the process by which the section on monks and nuns (*sōniryō*) evolved as an instrument for bringing the clergy and temples under state control and giving *ritsuryō* Buddhism its basic character. Even the Taihō code exists only in fragments. But a study of it, together with analyses of contemporary references and later codifications, leads us to believe that the pattern of legal control over monks and nuns had become firmly fixed by the early years of the eighth century, before the capital was moved to Nara.

Inoue Mitsusada's study of legal and administrative arrangements

88 Shuchō 1 (686) 5/24, NKBT 68.476–7. 89 DeVisser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, 2.533–4.
90 Ibid., 2.543–4.

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instituted on the continent for the control of Buddhism led him to distinguish between the rather loose system developed in China during the period of the Northern and Southern courts (420–589) and the very strict one of the Chinese empire reestablished in 589. The former, Inoue noted, was focused on the use of Buddhist priests to control the activities of other priests, whereas the control exercised by later Sui and T'ang emperors was centered on the appointment of civilian officials who were expected to force Buddhist institutions and the clergy to serve the state's interests. Until 645, Japan's control, as in Paekche, was of the loose variety developed in pre-Sui China. But after the beginning of the Great Reforms of 645, when Japanese leaders were becoming increasingly disturbed by T'ang and Silla expansion, Buddhist law had the stamp of T'ang severity. As we noted, Japan's ten Buddhist masters (who supervised the activities of monks and nuns) as well as the superintendents (placed in charge of temple property) extended state control over Buddhist affairs in the T'ang fashion.[91]

The severity of the T'ang is most clearly revealed in that section of the Taihō administrative code devoted to activities of the Buddhist clergy. In pointing to the central thrust of the *sōniryō* section, Inoue observed that its articles require that every monk and every nun (1) be trained and ordained only in ways approved by the state, (2) reside only in a Buddhist temple and not become engaged in religious activity outside the temple, and (3) avoid all violations of civil and canon law. According to such legal measures, rulers of the *ritsuryō* state followed the T'ang example in clearly distinguishing members of the clergy who had left their homes (*shukke*) from civilians who had not. In such legal measures, one detects a consistent urge to make certain that all Buddhist activity added spiritual authority to the position of the priestly sovereign. Consequently, particularly severe punishments were meted out to priests and nuns for (1) becoming a "private priest or nun" (*shido*), (2) helping or encouraging others to become private priests or nuns, (3) building a Buddhist chapel (*dōjō*) outside the compound of a regular temple, (4) conducting religious activity outside the temple, (5) residing in the mountains for religious training without official permission, (6) relating his or her interpretations of natural phenomena to state affairs, (7) doing anything to arouse the common people, (8) studying books on military tactics and strategy, or (9) becoming involved in the accumulation of property and wealth.

As Inoue pointed out, the Buddhist clergy had been regulated in a

91 Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon kodai no kokka to Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1971), pp. 34–39.

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similar way by the founder of the Chinese T'ang dynasty early in the seventh century. But the situation in China was then quite different: Buddhist monks and nuns were already propagating their faith among the common people; society was in considerable disarray; and Buddhism had already been linked with movements of popular protest.[92] The formulation of *sōniryō* in Japan, on the other hand, was apparently influenced not just by attempts to follow the Chinese models but also by endeavors to make every priest and nun into an efficient agent of support for what has been called Temmu's imperial system.

NARA BUDDHISM

After the capital was moved to Nara in 710, Japan nearly became a Buddhist state. Those were years in which a statewide system of temples was developed and primary attention was given to rites for protecting the state (*chingo kokka*). These state temples, together with the T'ang-oriented cultural activity associated with them, further strengthened the spiritual authority of autocratic emperors and empresses. The temples accumulated vast landholdings, and their priests gained unprecedented political influence, particularly during the reigns of two very devout Buddhist sovereigns: Emperor Shōmu (724 to 749) and his daughter who was enthroned first as Empress Kōken (749 to 757) and then as Empress Shōtoku (764 to 770). It was then that Buddhist monks were breaking loose from controls that had been firmly written into law at the beginning of the eighth century and were becoming engaged in religious movements that did not directly serve the interests of either the emperor or the state.

The statewide temple system

Although the task of instituting legal arrangements for controlling the Buddhist clergy was largely completed before the imperial palace was built at Nara in 710, the creation of a state system of temples had just begun. An imperial edict issued by Emperor Shōmu in 741 called for the establishment of state temples (*kokubun-ji*) in every province of the land; in 743 he took a vow to make a huge gilt-bronze statue of Rushana Buddha (Vairocana); and in 749 he abdicated and entered the Buddhist priesthood, even though as a descendant of Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess), he was the country's highest priest of kami worship.

92 Ibid., pp. 44–51.

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Within less than a decade, then, this ardent Buddhist had diverted much of the country's resources and energies to the creation of an extensive statewide temple system centered on a fifty-three-foot-high statue of Rushana.

The idea that the emperor should order the founding of an official temple in every province of the land did not originate with Emperor Shōmu. Over fifty years earlier Shōmu's great-grandfather, Emperor Temmu, had ordered the building of Buddhist chapels (*dōjō*) in each [official] residence of the several provinces, proclaiming that these were to be places for holding Buddhist rites and housing Buddhist statues and sutras. This edict was followed in 694 by an order from Empress Jitō that copies of the Golden Light Sutra be distributed to the provinces and that the sutra be read at the beginning of the first month of every year. In China the tradition of emperors' establishing Buddhist temples in outlying prefectures had even deeper roots, running as far back as the fifth century. So when Emperor Shōmu issued his edict in 741, he surely knew that similar steps had been taken by his imperial ancestors and by T'ang emperors for more than a century.

But the provincial temple system that Shōmu set out to build was quite different from earlier ones. Unlike Temmu, Shōmu was intent on building grand temple compounds that would include seven-storied pagodas, not just chapels where rites were performed and paraphernalia was stored. His provincial temples were, moreover, not carbon copies of the Chinese model, for he was calling for the founding of a new temple in each province, not just following the Chinese practice of giving official recognition and titles to existing institutions. In addition, Shōmu's local temple system was closely bound to the Golden Light Sutra's promise that Buddhist power would protect a state and its rulers, whereas China's prefectural temples were not usually identified with one particular sutra.[93] Indeed, Japan's new provincial temples were actually called the Golden-Light, Four-Heavenly-Kings, Protect-the-State temples (*konkōmyō shitennō gokoku no tera*).

Concluding that Shōmu's motivation for building an official temple in every province did not spring from an urge to complete a project started by his great-grandfather, or from a desire to create a Japanese

93 An exception was the Great Cloud temples (Ta-yün ssu) built late in the seventh century by Empress Wu. Even their names point to Buddhist worship taught in a minor sutra called the Mahāmegha or Great Cloud Sutra; Richard W. L. Guisso, "The Reigns of the Empress Wu, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung (684–712)," in Denis Twitchett and Howard J. Wechsler, eds., *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 305.

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copy of an existing Chinese temple system, we must ask why he should have decided to require every province to undertake such an ambitious building project at this particular time. A cursory glance at the economic and political situation of that day, together with a close reading of what Shōmu himself said in his edict of 741, suggest that he sincerely believed the building of these temples, coupled with their related religious activities, would eliminate epidemics and poor crops and restore health and prosperity to the land.

As noted in other chapters of this volume, in 735 Japan had begun to suffer from a smallpox epidemic that had apparently broken out first in Kyushu and then spread north and east, finally reaching the capital in 737 and causing death and terror among aristocrats at the court. Four top figures of the powerful Fujiwara clan, popularly referred to as the Fujiwara Four, all succumbed to the disease in 737, forcing a sharp decline in Fujiwara influence and the sudden rise of a regime headed by an imperial prince. In 737 Emperor Shōmu issued an edict requiring that three Buddha statues (one of Shaka Buddha and two of attending bodhisattvas) be made, and ten sections of the Lotus Sutra copied, in every province.[94]

For several months before Shōmu handed down the provincial temple–building edict of 741, the court was also troubled by political unrest. An uprising headed by Fujiwara no Hirotsugu (d. 740) broke out in the seventh month of 740, and in the twelfth month of that same year the capital was moved to Kuni. Although the edict issued three months later does not refer directly to the danger of uprisings, it does indicate that conditions were bad enough to warrant special measures for obtaining divine intervention:

> Of late crops have been poor and epidemic sickness has been rife. Fear and mortification follow one upon another. We alone are responsible, as we have made mistakes. We have searched widely for ways to achieve good fortune for the people. As a result of that search, some years ago we dispatched messengers bearing instructions that the land's national shrines be enlarged and repaired.[95] We also ordered the erection of a sixteen-foot-high statue of Sākyamuni and the copying of the Daihannya Sutra, in every province of the realm.[96] Since then and from spring through autumn, the winds and rains have been orderly and grain harvests good. These are signs that our sincere prayers have been answered. We are now in constant awe and dread, unable

94 *Shoku Nihongi* Tempyō 9 (737) 3/3; Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Shintei zōho: Kokushi taikei* (hereafter cited as KT) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959), vol. 1, p. 143; Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon kodai no kokka to Bukkyō*, pp. 51–58; William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 53–73.

95 Such action was taken, according to the *Shoku Nihongi*, in Tempyō 9 (737) 11/3, KT 1.148.

96 This is reported in a *Shoku Nihongi* item dated Tempyō 9 (737) 3/3, KT 1.143.

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even to sleep. In the Ultimately Victorious King Sutra, it is written that when a king shall cause this sutra to be read, expounded, and propagated devoutly throughout his realm, the Four Heavenly Kings will surely protect that country against all calamity, prevent sorrow and pestilence, and cause the hearts of believers to be filled with joy.[97]

These sections of the 741 edict are in accord not only with what has been recorded about the troubling conditions of that day but also with the traditional role of an emperor as high priest. In the face of the critical situation that existed after 737, Shōmu was not relying solely on the spiritual power of imported Buddhism but continuing, like the emperors and empresses before him, to function as high priest in the worship of native kami.

The great statue of Vairocana (J.: Rushana) Buddha

Before three more years had passed, Emperor Shōmu issued another edict that occupies a prominent position in the history of state Buddhism. It announced the emperor's intent to build a great statue of Buddha, which still stands as a momument to the cultural achievements of Nara Japan. The edict also suggests an imperial endorsement for a new type of Buddhism: the teachings of the Kegon Sutra. The emperor explained the action in this way:

On this day, the fifteenth day of the tenth month of Tempyō 15 (743), we take the bodhisattva great vow and declare our intention of erecting a gilded bronze image of Rushana Buddha. In using the copper of the provinces, casting this image, and leveling off a place in the hills for a hall in which to house it, we – as a Buddhist convert – wish to obtain the assistance of people throughout the land so that each person might achieve Buddhahood and share in the land's resulting prosperity. We are the possessor of the land's resources and could easily use them to make this statue. But attaining matters of the heart is too difficult to be handled in this way. Our concern is that persons with wealth might not feel good about this request and come to abuse the sages or turn against the living, thereby becoming victims of pollution [*tsumi*] and crime. So we request that believers [*chishiki ni azukaru mono*] heartily cultivate piety and invite good fortune by worshiping Rushana Buddha three times every day and, through the power of their feelings, contribute to the making of this Rushana Buddha statue. If a person of devotion makes a contribution of even one blade of grass or one clod of earth, he will be contributing to the making of this statue. Let it be proclaimed widely that it is

97 *Shoku Nihongi* Tempyō 13 (741) 3/24, KT 1. 163–4. The translation is based on that by Philip Thompson, unpublished.

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our will that no provincial or district official shall pressure the people in the name of this edict to make contributions.[98]

Emperor Shōmu's new interest in Rushana (rather than in the Four Heavenly Kings) and in mass conversion (rather than magic rites) suggests that a fundamental change of religious thought had arisen from the introduction and spread of Kegon teachings, a subject of considerable interest to historians of ancient Buddhism.

The casting of the huge statue was finally started in 747. Although hampered by eight failures, a successful casting was made in 749. Early that year, while the statue was being gilded and the shortage of gold was realized, news suddenly reached the capital that gold had been discovered in the northern province of Mutsu, the first such discovery in Japan. After Emperor Shōmu reported the good news to the kami worshiped at shrines around the capital, he and his empress proceeded to the front of the new Rushana statue where the emperor, facing north like a minister approaching his sovereign, handed down an edict that opened with these words: "We, an Emperor who is a servant of the Three Treasures of Buddhism, approach this statue of Rushana Buddha and submit the following message." Then Shōmu reported the wondrous discovery of gold and proclaimed it "a blessing bestowed on us by Rushana Buddha."[99] In 752, three years later, came the statue's dedication service attended by Empress Kōken (who had succeeded her father in the year that gold was discovered), her royal father and mother, and the highest officials of state. Musicians from the several temples were present. Dancing and singing were provided by the members of the nobility. As the *Shoku Nihongi* notes, no Japanese Buddhist service (*sai'e*) had ever equaled this one.

The statue of Rushana was an imposing capstone of a statewide temple system that included an expanding network of provincial temples administered by priests residing at the Tōdai-ji in the capital, where the great Rushana statue was housed. But the universality of the statue's symbolism is also revealed in the statue itself: Rushana sits on a great lotus flower with buddhas emerging from each of its petals. Finally, the symbolism is described in a Kumarajiva translation that includes this passage:

98 *Shoku Nihongi* Tempyō 15 (743) 10/15, KT 1.175. Some of the words and phrases used here can be found in Ryusaku Tsunoda, W. Theodore deBary, and Donald Keene, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 1.104–5, and in Philip Thompson's unpublished manuscript.

99 *Shoku Nihongi* Tempyō Shōhō 2 (749) 4/1, KT 1.197.

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I, Rushana Buddha, sit on a lotus platform surrounded by a thousand lotus petals on which a thousand buddhas are manifested. Within each petal are a billion states and in each state is a [smaller] buddha that sits below a bodhi tree following the Buddha way. The original body [*honshin*] of the thousand great buddhas and billion small buddhas is Rushana. Below each of these thousand great and billion small buddhas is a mass of numberless [boddhisattvas] approaching me, listening to my recitation of the Buddha precepts, and opening the gates to enlightenment [*satori*]. As they do so, the thousand great and billion small buddhas return to their original place [in me] while sitting under their bodhi trees and listening to the chanting of their original teacher. . . .

You are [potential] boddhisattvas of a new learning. If you accept my precepts, you will be included in the boddhisattva group. And if the boddhisattvas accept my precepts, they will be transformed immediately into buddhas.

So the entire [boddhisattva] group should respect the whole [of my cosmic order] and sincerely listen to my chanting of the Buddha precepts.[100]

In approaching this impressive symbolization of a structured Rushana world order, Emperor Shōmu must have thought of himself as a ruler of one of those billion states in the Rushana cosmos and must have realized, too, that his Great Buddha–centered temple system was drawing the minds of his subjects (particularly the highly placed ones) toward a state that transcended local communities.

The provincial temple–founding edict handed down by Emperor Shōmu in the second month of 741 indicates that at that time he was thinking of Buddhism mainly in magical terms: as a faith centered on rites that could benefit the state by eliminating disease and producing good rice crops. And yet two years later, when ordering the building of the great Rushana statue, his attention was focused on a different Buddha (Rushana, not Shaka) and on a different sutra (the Kegon, not the Golden Light or Benevolent King). Moreover, in 743 Emperor Shōmu was no longer stressing magic rites that could protect the state but was drawing attention to two of the most fundamental thrusts of the Buddhist message: the power of Buddha to bring enlightenment to human individuals, and the universal truth of a Buddha that transcends this physical world. Such a sharp change in the emperor's Buddhist outlook, within a time span of two years, makes one wonder how this could have happened and why.

The Kegon Sutra and Gyōki's influence

The first mention of the Kegon Sutra can be found in a 722 record of Empress Genshō's having this and several other sutras copied as a

100 Based on Ishida Ichirō's unpublished interpretation.

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prayer for her mother Empress Gemmei, who had died in 715. But the Kegon Sutra, translated into Chinese at the end of the seventh century, seems not to have had much influence on Japanese religious thought until Rōben – a Buddhist priest with an immigrant background who had studied Kegon teachings in China – returned to Japan in 740 and became associated with the temple later known as the Tōdai-ji. It was in those years that the Kegon school, made up of priests with a special interest in the teachings of the Kegon Sutra, came into existence. Presumably the spread of interest in Kegon had reached the court's inner circles by 742 and had affected Emperor Shōmu's thoughts about what was important in Buddhist teachings.

But Shōmu's own conversion to Kegon seems to have been influenced also by a popular Buddhist movement that had been gaining strength for more than twenty years. This movement was identified with thoughts and activities of the Buddhist priest Gyōki (668–749) who, according to a burial inscription commemorating his death, was a descendant of the Korean Confucian scholar (Wani) who had come to Japan in the fifth century. Much of what we know about Gyōki's early years is based on somewhat unreliable information gleaned from a genealogical account compiled in 1175, long after his death. Judging from what is recorded there, he seems to have become affiliated quite early with the great Yakushi-ji that was completed in 698 when Gyōki was thirty years old.

Historians are fairly certain that Gyōki had studied under Dōshō (629–700), a priest who had been a student in China between 653 and 660 and who, after returning to Japan, built a temple for the practice of Zen contemplation at Gangō-ji. After spending more than ten years in missionary and social work in the surrounding area, Dōshō was ordered by imperial edict to return to being a resident priest of Gangō-ji. He is reputed to have been the founder, in Japan, of the Hossō sect (Chinese: Fa-hsiang-tsung) and to have gained an understanding of its consciousness-only (*yuishiki*) and Yoga (*yuga*) doctrines. Because both Gyōki and Dōshō were associated with the Hossō sect and its doctrines and both were engaged in missionary and social work outside government temples, it is felt that Gyōki might well have been a disciple of Dōshō, who died when Gyōki was thirty-two years old.

For the years until 717 we have only general and unconfirmed reports that Gyōki had finished one or more of his "forty-nine temples," carried out evangelistic work among the people, and completed such public service activity as building bridges and digging

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ponds.[101] The statement in the *Shoku Nihongi*, written at the time of Gyōki's death in 749, outlined his accomplishments:

> High Priest Gyōki died on the second day of the second month. He was a priest of the Yakushi-ji and a member of the Koshi clan from the province of Izumi. . . . After leaving home to enter the priesthood, he studied the consciousness-only and Yoga doctrines and went around preaching them to people in the neighborhood of the capital. The number of people who rushed to follow him, yearning to become lay priests, numbered in the thousands. Whenever people heard that he was coming, they would compete with one another in running to honor him. . . . Followed by relatives and disciples, he would build bridges and embankments at strategic places.[102]

Ienaga believes that the people rushing to become followers of Gyōki were people in and around the capital who had become impoverished – often leaving their farms to become vagrants – because of such costly projects as establishing a new bureaucratic order, building two new Chinese-style capitals (first in Fujiwara and then in Nara), and waging campaigns against the Ainu on the northern frontier.[103]

The 717 ban on Gyōki's activities provides some detail about what he was doing and helps explain why the government moved to stamp out his movement. The charges made in the edict were (1) that whereas the law for priests and nuns (in the Taihō code) stipulates that members of the clergy are not to propagate the Buddhist faith outside government-recognized temples, Gyōki and his followers have been leaving their temples to deliver sermons to commoners on questions of sin and good fortune; (2) that whereas the law stipulates that only small amounts of alms are to be solicited and at specified times, Gyōki and his followers have been going from house to house soliciting far more alms than they need; and (3) that whereas the law forbids activities that involve the burning or mutilation of bodies, Gyōki and his followers have not only been doing these things but also identifying such activities with the Buddhist way, thereby bewitching and confusing the people.[104]

But Gyōki ignored the ban and continued to propagate his faith, to carry out such public service projects as building bridges and roads to facilitate transportation, digging ponds and embankments to improve irrigation systems, and establishing inns to house people who were transporting goods for the payment of taxes. During the 720s, the government gradually softened its position toward such religious activ-

101 Ienaga Saburō, *Nihon Bukkyō shisō no tenkai* (Kyoto: Heiraku-ji shoten, 1956), p. 13.
102 Tempyō Shōhō 1 (749) 2/2, KT 1.196–7. 103 Ienaga, "Gyōki," p. 13.
104 *Shoku Nihongi*, Yōrō 1 (717) 4/23, KT 1.68–69.

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ity: In a 731 order, Gyōki was not referred to in such a demeaning manner as before, and his followers were designated *ubasoku* and *ubai*, men and women who were being trained for the priesthood. And yet the authorities still denied legitimacy to the groups (congregations) that had gathered around Gyōki.

But in 741 the state seems to have recognized the legitimacy of Gyōki's congregations and, moreover, used them when constructing a large bridge over the Kizu River when moving the capital to Kuni. The *Shoku Nihongi* carries this report:

> It was decided that a bridge should be built over the river east of Mt. Kase. Between the seventh month and this (tenth) month, work on this construction was completed. *Ubasoku* were mobilized for the work from around the capital and the various provinces, and after the bridge was finished, 750 *ubasoku* were admitted to the priesthood.[105]

Although Gyōki's name does not appear in the report, a later chronology of his life (the *Gyōki nempu*, compiled more than two hundred years later) states that Gyōki built an inn for workers on the bank of the Kizu River and for the big bridge of Izumi. The latter is thought to have been the bridge referred to in the 741 item of the *Shoku Nihongi*.[106]

The government's reversal of policy toward Gyōki and his activities, thereby replacing the ban on his activities with high official appointments, was related to Emperor Shōmu's rather sudden interest in, and commitment to, Kegon teachings. Although we have no evidence that Gyōki shared Shōmu's preoccupation with Kegon or that Shōmu shared Gyōgi's Hossō leanings, both men were becoming more deeply affected by two basic elements of Buddhist teachings: their universalism (arising from the promise that Buddha law can benefit all peoples in all times and places) and their humanity (stemming from the promise that Buddha law can enable any person to achieve enlightenment at any time or place). Thus the religious ideas and activities of the 740s are thought to have made this a significant period in Japanese religious history, causing historians to ask two difficult questions: How deeply and broadly were Shōmu and his fellow aristocrats affected by Buddhist universalism and Buddhist humanism? Were these qualities strong in the Gyōki movement, and were they subverted by Gyōki's cooperation with Japan's imperial government?

105 Tempyō 13 (741) 10/2, KT 1.166.
106 Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, vol. 4 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1974), p. 295.

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The famous thirteenth-century Buddhist historian Jien (1155–1225) wrote about Buddhism under Shōmu as follows:

> During his reign Buddhist Law flourished, great Minister Kibi and High Priest Gembō went to T'ang China and brought back a 5,000-fascicle collection of Buddhist scripture, the Tōdai-ji temple was built, and Bodhisattva Gyōki (668–749) founded provincial temples. As indicated by such developments, Buddhist Law prospered while Shōmu reigned. . . . On the 3rd day of the 7th month of 749, Shōmu stepped down from the throne at the age of 50 and entered the Buddhist priesthood. His Buddhist name (*hōki*) was Shōman.[107]

Although Jien apparently was wrong in identifying Gyōki as a founder of provincial temples, he was correct in considering the Shōmu reign a remarkable time of temple construction and scriptural study. As the first Japanese emperor to enter the Buddhist priesthood after abdicating and passing the throne to his daughter, Shōmu continued to give imperial support to the Buddhist cause. These developments, seen in the light of Shōmu's pronouncements, leave the strong impression that he was indeed a sincere Buddhist believer.

When considering Shōmu's new interest in universalism and salvation, we should ask whether he had turned away from the magical use of Buddhist rites for "protecting the state." Apparently not. He seems, rather, to have thought of the great Rushana statue as symbolizing above all the emperor's spiritual authority over all lands and peoples in the Japanese state and to have regarded converts and congregations mainly as instruments for strengthening state Buddhism. This is clearly revealed in an edict written in 753 and inscribed on a bronze plaque at the Tōdai-ji. It begins with Shōmu referring to himself as a former emperor who now holds the priestly name of Shōman and who models himself on a bodhisattva and "prostrates himself before the Three Treasures of the Ten Directions and the Three Ages." Then he outlines his support of Buddhism, beginning with the vow he had made in 741 to have temples built in every province for the "protection of the state through the power inherent in the Four Heavenly King and Golden Light sutras." Then he goes on to say that he hoped through such acts of piety:

> to make Buddhism flourish, causing it to be transmitted eternally through the ages as long as there be Heaven and Earth; to protect the realms of both the living and the dead through the beneficent grace of Buddha; to shelter and

107 Delmer M. Brown and Ichirō Ishida, *The Future and the Past: A Translation and Study of the Gukanshō, an Interpretative History of Japan Written in 1219* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 32, 273.

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protect the realms of both the living and the dead, bringing all to constant and fulsome perfection; and to establish order and mutual harmony among the deities of Heaven and Earth so that they will forever protect the state and cause men to enjoy felicity and good fortune.[108]

Although it includes thoughts of "fulsome perfection" for the living and the dead, this pronouncement is focused on the power of Buddhism to "protect the state" through institutions and rites established by, and reinforcing the spiritual authority of, Japan's emperors and empresses.

Questions about the depth and character of Gyōki's Buddhist humanism have been the subject of considerable debate and disagreement among religious historians. Lacking any direct evidence of what Gyōki was saying in his sermons, their studies have been based mainly on records of what he and his followers were doing at particular times and places and on what was said about their activities in the *Shoku Nihongi*. Two distinguished postwar historians, Ishimoda Shō and Tamura Enchō, concluded that Gyōki's Buddhism was essentially magic. But Futaba Kenkō, after carefully reexamining the evidence used to support such views, sees Gyōki as standing in a religious position fundamentally different from that of the *ritsuryō* state's architects and high priests. The latter, he maintains, were preoccupied with magical practices in their pursuit of worldly benefits and thus overlooked the self-denying Buddhist message. Futaba thinks, on the other hand, that Gyōki, though he violated laws governing the activities of the Buddhist clergy, understood the implications of religious practices carried out within the Mahayana spirit and was able to surmount the ethics of a magical–religious consciousness and to envision an ethical world in which human beings acted altruistically toward one another.[109]

Was the government's reversal of policy toward Gyōki linked with an abrupt change in the nature of Gyōki's beliefs and practices? Futaba thinks not, claiming that Gyōki's preaching and congregational activity were not drastically altered or reduced by the government's more lenient stance beginning in 731. Futaba also does not believe that Gyōki was a particularly active participant in the government's task of moving the capital to Kuni. Admitting that Gyōki held a priestly position in government after 743 and was probably attracted to the idea of having Buddhist converts participate in making the Rushana

108 A slightly revised version of an unpublished translation by Philip Thompson, which was based on a text in the *Koji ruien* (Tokyo: Tsukiji kappan seizōsho, 1915), Shūyōbu, 52.1099.
109 Futaba, *Nihon kodai Bukkyō-shi no kenkyū*, pp. 254–65.

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statue, Futaba is not convinced that Gyōki's beliefs and practices were much changed by his rather loose association with the government. Futaba even doubts that Gyōki was a central figure in the Rushana statue enterprise, pointing out that nothing was said about such a role in the earliest-known biography of Gyōki, in statements made about him in the *Shoku Nihongi*, or in any reliable account of his life. So Futaba takes the rather convincing stance that although Gyōki was drawn into the statue-making project, he soon came to feel that such work, meant to achieve magical results for the state, was increasing the people's burdens and should not be fully supported. Even Gyōki's appointment to the high priestly rank of *daisōjō* in 745 was followed by intense public service work which, according to tales found in the *Nihon ryōiki*, included building a bridge, dredging an inlet, and constructing a boat harbor in Naniwa.[110]

When writing his book in 1956 on the spread of Buddhist universalism, Ienaga Saburō did not consider Gyōki's thought and activities to be particularly significant. But in the light of Futaba's studies, he might now assign Gyōki a more prominent position in the history of Japanese Buddhism.[111]

Ascetic mountain Buddhism

A second Buddhist movement of the Nara period, commonly referred to as "ascetic mountain Buddhism" (*sanrin Bukkyō*), shared certain features with Gyōki's religious activity. Both movements spread among commoners and local gentry, flourished outside the state's temple system, and emerged from religious positions not defined by "protect the state" doctrine. But ascetic mountain worship had qualities of its own. Whereas Gyōki's work concentrated on public service, mountain ascetics reputedly had mysterious powers, gained through esoteric practices, to help individuals achieve Buddhahood here and now (*sokushin jōbutsu*). This emphasis on mystic power obtained from discipline undertaken far from the worldly affairs of village and city was an important aspect of the original Buddhism of India, as well as of the Tendai and Shingon sects in later Heian times.

The mountain movement seems to have begun in the previous seventh century with En no Ozunu, an immigrant magician who was said to have been exiled to the mountains of Izu for troubles caused by his calling down a curse. En no Ozunu's magic practices were apparently

110 Ibid., pp. 266–8. 111 Ienaga, *Nihon Bukkyō shisō no tenkai*, pp. 4, 6–19.

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then joined with and strengthened by popular Shinto belief in sacred mountains and also by esoteric forms of Buddhism. Eventually he, and others like him, operated first from the sacred Katsuragi Mountains of Yamato and later from sacred mountains in other parts of the country. These miracle-working priests appeared to practice their art mainly in attempts to heal the sick and lighten the burdens of the miserable, gradually forming groups of believers that were not unlike the congregations assembled by Gyōki. Buddhist tales included in the *Nihon ryōiki* (compiled early in the ninth century) suggest that ascetic mountain priests had become active in provinces as far away as Shinano.

While mountain Buddhism was spreading to distant parts of the land, it was also affecting religious and political life at court. Particularly spectacular influence of this kind was exerted by Dōkyō (d. 772), whose sudden rise to high positions at court was due in large measure to the miraculous healing power that he was thought to have acquired at an early age from training and discipline obtained in the Katsuragi Mountains of Kawachi. His training is said to have included the study of Sanskrit learning and the mastery of esoteric Buddhist methods of eliminating pollution and evil, methods known as *nyo-i-rin shukuyō*. (The *nyo-i-rin* were mystical rites held before the Nyo-i-rin Kannon at the Nyo-i-rin temple, reputedly founded by En no Ozunu, and the *shukuyō* was an astrological doctrine introduced from India.) After leaving his mountain retreat, Dōkyō became a priest at the Tōdai-ji where he was known as a healing-Zen (contemplation) master (*kambyō zenshi*). Finally, he was attached to the Buddhist chapel at the court and in 761 became a favorite of Empress Kōken, who felt that her miraculous recovery from illness had been brought about by rites that Dōkyō performed.

Immediately after gaining favor with the empress, Dōkyō received one promotion after another. In 763 he was appointed junior bishop (*shōsōzu*). In 765 after the empress had reascended the throne as Empress Shōtoku, Dōkyō was named chancellor Zen master (*daijōdaijin zenshi*). And in 766 he was given the highest position ever held by a person not born in the imperial line: Buddhist king (Hō-ō). An even more startling development came in 769 when Hachiman (a kami especially respected for its oracular messages) revealed that Dōkyō was the most suitable successor to the throne. But a leader of the anti-Dōkyō faction advised the empress to have the oracle checked. At this point Hachiman handed down another message that reiterated the traditional view that the empress should be succeeded only by a prince or princess born in the imperial line. And yet Dōkyō continued to

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exercise influence over government affairs until the empress's death in 770, when he was transferred to a minor position in a distant province.

During Dōkyō's peak years, Buddhist institutions and priests received special treatment. As early as 764 a ban was placed on the hunting of falcons, and arrangements were made for periodically and ceremonially freeing "living creatures," thereby complying with Buddhist teachings against the taking of life. Then when the empress, now a Buddhist nun, ascended the throne as Empress Shōtoku in 764, she handed down an edict that seemed to place Buddhism above the worship of kami (see Chapter 10, this volume). And during her reign there was another surge of temple building in which two great temples were constructed at the capital: the Saidai-ji (meant to equal the great Tōdai-ji) and the Sairyū-ji (a nunnery paired with the Hōryū-ji monastery). Meanwhile, state temples were being richly endowed with land and people. In 765, when the government moved to restrict the private possession of uncultivated land, it prohibited such holdings by nobles and ministers and reduced those held by others from one to two *chō*, but it did not reduce the large area of uncultivated land that a temple could own. This meant that the Tōdai-ji could continue to own four thousand *chō*, the Gangō-ji two thousand *chō*, and several other big temples (including provincial ones) one thousand *chō* each. The priests at state temples around the country thus continued their efforts to increase temple revenue by enclosing more and more land.[112]

By tracing the course of change in Buddhist action and thought during the Nara period, drawing attention to the sharp increase in the number and power of temples (probably numbering around two hundred at the beginning of the period and well over a thousand at the end) and priests (thousands at the capital and hundreds at provincial centers), and outlining the spread of Buddhist art and learning (see Chapter 9) one is apt to overstate the importance of Buddhism in Nara religious life. The deepest and most widespread religious activity of this period was kami worship, not Buddha worship. Even the new China-oriented *ritsuryō* bureaucracy of the day placed kami affairs well above Buddhist affairs. Most Buddhist rites were, moreover, not essentially different from kami rites: Both were meant to help a community (or its leader) obtain rich harvests, good health, and protection from natural disaster. Ascetic mountain Buddhism, probably the most popular Buddhist movement of the period, owed much of its popularity to an association

112 Hayakawa, *Ritsuryō kokka*, pp. 335–7.

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with mountains where particular kami were believed to reside and to ritual that (in Buddhist form) was essentially like kami worship in its emphasis on divine blessings that could be obtained here and now. (For a discussion of mountains in early Shintoism see Chapter 6.)

The Shinto overtones of Buddhist worship is most clearly revealed in studies of the spread of Buddhism to local communities. These show, first, that the advance was not essentially a product of individual conversions but of actions taken by clan chieftains who continued to function as chief priests in the worship of the clan kami and, at the same time, to build Buddhist temples where Buddhist services were held. Every member of the clan, as well as every clan chieftain, seems to have assumed – especially in the native segment of Japanese society – that a clan's divine beings (kami or Buddha) were more likely to bestow their blessings on the community if approached by the clan chieftain at the right time and in the right manner. The prime times were at the beginning of the year and at the start and end of the growing season. The rites that pleased a divine being, then and now, were dramatic and interesting, and it was generally agreed that any deity (kami or Buddha) would be pleased by exotic rites linked with impressive pagodas, bells, and statues.[113]

Studies of religious life in local communities of the Nara period show that the spread of Buddhist beliefs and practices was facilitated also by the compatibility of shrines and temples and by the rise of ideas about how kami and Buddha supported each other. These connections and relationships, orchestrated by the clan chieftains, made everyone even more receptive to the introduction of strangely appealing Buddhist practices.

Although native kami shrines and imported Buddhist temples maintained separate identities, the shrines – especially such important ones as Kasuga in the capital and Usa Hachiman in Kyushu – were strongly influenced by Buddhist architectural styles and ceremonial forms. The Buddhist influence was especially strong at Usa Hachiman where early kami worship reflected the influence of shamanistic practices introduced from Korea, the maritime interests of people living along north Kyushu shores that had to be passed by ships sailing between Korea and Naniwa in central Japan, and the special connections with the country's dominant clans.[114] The Usa Hachiman Shrine

113 Takatori Masao, "Minkan Bukkyō no shinten," in Ienaga Saburō et al., eds., *Nihon Bukkyō shi*, vol. 1, p. 163.

114 Ross Bender, "The Hachiman Cult and the Dōkyō Incident," *Monumenta Nipponica* 24 (Summer 1979): 129.

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was one of the thirty-eight shrines that, at the beginning of the Heian period, had their own Buddhist temple, a *jingūji* (kami shrine temple) where Buddhist sutras and rites were read and performed. A number of sources tell us of kami requests to have a particular sutra recited at its shrine in order that the kami might obtain relief from the misery of worldly existence. At Usa and elsewhere kami beliefs were transformed by the humanistic teachings of Buddhism: Kami not only acted more like humans but also were represented by statues in human form.[115]

Buddhism, on the other hand, continued to be affected by the worship of kami. Ancient and enduring belief in the power of any kami to benefit life here and now continued to make the Japanese receptive to Buddhist rites that would cure illness, bring rain, stop epidemics, or make the state prosperous. Kami belief seems also to have increased resistance to the basic Buddhist teaching that an individual could achieve enlightenment only by eliminating attachments to life of this world. Particular Buddhist temples were even supported by particular kami. A spectacular example of such support occurred in 749, the year in which work on the Rushana statue was completed and Empress Kōken ascended the throne. That was when Hachiman (the kami worshiped at Usa in Kyushu) indicated by means of an oracle that it wished to be enshrined near the Tōdai-ji in Nara so that it, along with other kami, might pay homage to the Great Buddha. In reporting what transpired at the time, the *Shoku Nihongi* provides details of a grand procession by which Hachiman's *shintai* was transported to Nara, and of the erection of a new building near the Tōdai-ji for Hachiman's enshrinement. We are also told that when a priestess and priest of the new Hachiman Shrine paid their respects to the Great Buddha statue, they were accompanied by Empress Kōken, Retired Emperor Shōmu, and hundreds of officials. Five thousand priests were asked to offer prayers and read sutras, and Retired Emperor Shōmu issued an edict in which he used the following words of praise for Hachiman's role in the Great Buddha enterprise:

> In 740, when we were on the throne, we paid our respects to the Rushana statue of the "believer temple" [*chishiki-ji*] in the Ōagata District of Kawachi. Then we wished to have [another big] Rushana statue made, but for some time we were unable to achieve our objective, whereupon we appealed to the great Kami Hachiman of Hirohata, whose shrine is in the Usa District of Buzen. Hachiman responded as follows: "Leading the heavenly and earthly deities, we . . . shall see that the statue is made." We were overjoyed. And

115 Ibid., pp. 166–8.

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now with trepidation we confer the fourth rank junior grade on the shrine's priestess Morime and the outer fifth rank junior grade on the shrine's priest Ōmiwa no Ason Tamaro.[116]

The shrine built in Nara still guards the Tōdai-ji, the central temple of Shōmu's statewide Buddhist temple system.

Twenty years later Hachiman again came to the support of Buddhism. That was when the foreign faith had almost achieved the status of a state religion and when Dōkyō (a Buddhist priest) was being touted as Empress Kōken's successor to the throne. According to the official chronicle of that day (the *Shoku Nihongi*), Hachiman handed down the following oracle: "A great peace will come to the realm if Dōkyō should become emperor."[117] Not long afterward, Hachiman reversed its position, and Dōkyō did not become emperor. But the fact that a kami – not a Buddha – provided divine sanction for the proposal that a Buddhist priest become Japan's next emperor indicates that kami belief still stood above Buddha belief, at least when deciding whether the throne should be occupied by a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess. Even an ambitious Buddhist priest, holding a very high office and enjoying the favors of a reigning empress, had apparently turned to a kami for divine support when making his bid for the throne[118] (see Chapters 4 and 10 for discussions of other aspects of this authority crisis).

Other kami were subsequently enshrined near other important temples. Even Saichō (767–822) and Kūkai (774–835), founders of the Heian period Tendai and Shingon sects, turned to the protection of kami for their great temple complexes on Mt. Hie and Mt. Kōya. And with the rise of increasingly close ties between the native and foreign faiths, doctrines were devised to explain relationships between a protective kami and a protected Buddha. These involved such ideas as a particular kami and Buddha existing as one body (*shinbutsu dōtai*) and a kami manifesting the essence of Buddha (*honji suijaku*). Therefore the rapid spread of Buddhism during the Nara period was enmeshed – socially, institutionally, and theologically – with native kami worship, making it impossible to understand the development of either without seeing interaction between the two, an interaction commonly referred to as kami–Buddha fusion (*shinbutsu shūgo*).

116 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Shōhō 1 (749) 12/27, KT 1.206; the translation differs somewhat from that in Bender, "The Hachiman Cult," pp. 135–6.

117 Jingo Keiun 3 (769) 9/25, KT 2.369.

118 An excellent historical novel, focusing on relations between the two main characters in this crisis, is that by Shelley Mydans, *The Vermilion Bridge: A Novel of 8th Century Japan* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980).

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Kami belief thus affected Buddhism in fundamental ways. It certainly increased Japan's receptivity to magical and popular forms of Buddhism, and it strengthened resistance to Buddhist teachings of universal human salvation, thereby preventing the thoughts and actions of such Japanese Buddhists as Prince Shōtoku and Gyōki from affecting Japanese religious life deeply and permanently. And yet when seen from a social and cultural perspective, Buddhism was a truly significant force: It provided a channel of contact with the culturally and technologically advanced peoples of the Asiatic continent, and it induced a growing number of Japanese to assign greater value to the human individual.

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CHAPTER 8

NARA ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

During the fifty years that followed the Great Reforms of 645, Japan's central government enacted laws and established bureaucratic procedures (strongly Chinese in character) that were meant to strengthen its control over, and increase its revenue from, the country's land and people. Scholars agree that these arrangements, commonly referred to as the *ritsuryō* (penal and administrative law) system, were closely intertwined with economic and social change in the Nara period (710 to 784). At the base of the *ritsuryō* order, periodic reallocations of rice land (*handen shūju*) were linked with an enforced registration of individuals in every household: Laws stipulated that every registered householder be allotted rice land in accordance with his or her age, sex, and social position.

The Taihō penal and administrative codes of 701 seem to have been quite well enforced during the first half of the eighth century. But then violations became more numerous and allocations more sporadic as the state's control over land and people weakened. Ostensibly the *ritsuryō* system continued to function as intended, but an increasingly large number of conditions and practices were beginning to subvert its effectiveness. Historians generally agree, nevertheless, that Japan's *ritsuryō* state structure reached its apogee during the Nara period and that only in the last half of the period, particularly after 740, were its foundations undermined by changing social and economic conditions.

LAND TENURE

Laws of the period refer to three types of land:[1,2] (1) arable land

1 This section is based on Torao Toshiya, *Handen shūju hō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961); and Kikuchi Yasuaki, *Nihon kodai tochi shoyū no kenkyū* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1969). Special problems of land control were investigated by Iyanaga Teizō, "Ritsuryōsei teki tochi shoyū," in *Kodai*, vol. 3 of Asao Naohiro, Ishii Susumu, Inoue Mitsusada, Ōishi Kaichirō et al., eds., *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1962), pp. 33–78; Takeuchi Rizō, "Handen hō no seiritsu to hōkai," in Ishimoda Shō et al., eds., *Kodai shi kōza* (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1963), vol. 7, pp. 203–31; Miyamoto Tasuku, "Ritsuryōsei teki tochi seido," in Ta-

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administered directly by the state; (2) garden and residential land held privately but with differences of tenure; and (3) the surrounding mountains, groves, rivers, and swamps that were used by all members of the community for wood gathering, hunting, and slash-and-burn agriculture. But the subject of most of these provisions was the land used for growing rice, or the surrounding communal land considered suitable for rice cultivation. Only gardens and residential plots were truly private. Some think that private possession was an ancient tradition never extended to cultivated land, probably because the production of rice required drainage and irrigation systems that could not be built or maintained by individuals operating independently. Later land laws were certainly affected by an ancient practice of having irrigation systems managed by the community as a whole. Although state ownership of water was not written into law, its existence and nature can be deduced from extant historical sources.

Although these laws regulated the distribution and use of arable land, they were never, as far as we know, extended to the distribution and use of land that might be brought under cultivation, a subject of primary importance to any agricultural society. The absence of such regulations, which was a divergence from the T'ang model, was conducive to the later spread of private ownership.

Allocations of rice land

According to the Yōrō code of 718, Japan's rice field allocation system (the *chün-t'ien* system of China adapted to the special conditions of Japan) contained the following elements:

1. Rice land was allocated to every individual above the age of six[3] according to sex and social position: A male commoner (*ryōmin*) received two *tan*, or about 2,300 square meters; a female commoner, two-thirds of that amount; a male slave (*senmin*) received

keuchi Rizō, ed., *Taikei Nihon shi sōsho* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1971), vol. 6, pp. 48–138; Yoshimura Takehiko, "Ritsuryō kokka to tochi shoyū," in Hara Hidesaburō, ed., *Kodai*, vol. 1 of *Taikei Nihon kokka shi* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 255–96.

2 Unless otherwise cited, laws on land control are those of the Yōrō civil code found in the *Ryō no gige*, published in Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Shintei zōho: kokushi taikei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1935) (hereafter cited as KT), vol. 23, and the *Ryō no shūge*, KT, vols. 23 and 24 (1943 and 1955). The Taihō civil code exists only in fragments, but its laws on land control probably were similar to those of the later Yōrō code.

3 Ages were then usually calculated by the number of calendar years in which a person had lived. Thus a child was considered to be one year old at birth and two at the beginning of the next calendar year. I have determined, however, that this system of calculating ages was not used for the allocation of land; see Torao, *Handen shūju hō no kenkyū*, pp. 35–47.

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one-third as much as a male commoner; and a female slave, one-third that of a female commoner.

2. In regions without enough rice land to meet these requirements, land was allocated in accordance with locally established formulas.
3. Every six years, allocations were adjusted to the current size and composition of each household. The year for readjustment (the *hannen*) usually came two years after a census had been taken.[4]
4. When an allotment holder died, his or her allotted land was returned to the state at the time of the next *hannen*. In case all or part of a household had fled to another province, or a person had been killed in battle away from home, return of allotments was delayed.
5. Allocated land could not be bought or sold, used as collateral for loans, inherited, or transferred to others. But renting (*chinso*) was permitted if an annual notice thereof was submitted to the provincial governor.

These elements of Japan's rice field allocation system had taken different forms before the adoption of the Yōrō code in 718.

When was the allocation system devised? According to the *Nihon shoki*, it was spelled out in an edict issued in the first month of 646.[5] Scholars now feel, however, that the contents of the edict show that it was written somewhat later. And yet the reform government may well have tried to set up some kind of land system and to make an inventory of the nation's paddy fields soon after the 645 coup d'état. Ishimoda Shō takes the position that a field distribution system (*fudensei*) – not including reallocation – was established after 645. Supporting evidence for this view is rather weak, but the logic of it is generally recognized.[6]

Was the Ōmi code compiled during the reign of Tenji (661–71), and were its provisions implemented? Various answers have been proposed, but none has yet been generally accepted. If such a code did exist, we do not know what kind of land system it outlined. My own view is that something similar to the one detailed in the Taihō and

4 Little is known of the process by which provincial officials made land allotments, but the laws required that household registration be started in the eleventh month of year A, that registration be completed by the fifth month of the following year B, and that an official land survey be made in the tenth month of year B. Actual allocation was started in the eleventh month of year B and completed by the second month of year C. In practice, surveys continued on into the spring of year C. Thus the actual allocation of rice land was made between the winter of year C and the spring of year D.

5 *Nihon shoki*, Kōtoku 2 (646) 1/1, in Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967) (hereafter cited as NKBT), vol 68, pp. 280–3; translated in W. G. Aston, *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pt. 2, pp. 206–10.

6 Ishimoda Shō, *Nihon no kodai kokka* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1971), pp. 318–21.

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Yōrō codes first appeared in the Asuka no Kiyomihara administrative code compiled late in Temmu's reign (672–86) and promulgated in 689.[7] Nothing of this code remains. From indirect evidence we deduce that its land allocation provisions differed from later formulations in one important respect: All persons listed on a household register were entitled to an allotment, and nothing apparently was said about allocations varying with the grantee's age. We have no definite proof that everyone received shares of land, but an examination of allotments made to households in northern Kyushu (an area for which we have household registers for the year 702) suggests that all individuals received shares, irrespective of age.[8]

By the Taihō code of 701, allotments were made only to persons over the age of six, a change that may have resulted from a shortage of arable land. But a more likely explanation is that the high rate of infant mortality was forcing the government to reallocate land too often, thereby creating heavy administrative burdens and management difficulties. The Taihō code also reflected some change in the disposition of land held by persons who died before the first reallocation, stipulating that such land did not have to be returned to the state at the time of the next reallocation, but six years later.[9] This exception was removed in the later Yōrō code, possibly because not enough land was available for allocation.

Uniqueness of Japan's allotment system

If we compare Japan's allotment system of about 718 with the Chinese model, we find important differences. Adapted somewhat to divergent economic and social conditions, Japan's systems contained the following unique features:

1. In China an allotment was valid for a fixed number of years and made the allotment holder responsible for paying taxes. But in Japan allotments were not linked directly with the obligation to pay

7 Torao, *Handen shūju hō no kenkyū*, pp. 53–80. For alternative views, see Kishi Toshio, *Nihon kodai sekichō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1973), pp. 73–81; and Miyahara Takeo, *Nihon kodai no kokka to nōmin* (Tokyo: Hōsei University Press, 1973), pp. 164–211. For my rebuttal, see Torao Toshiya, *Nihon kodai tochi hō shiron* (Tokyo, Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 50–101.

8 These household registers are published in Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo, ed., *Dai Nihon komonjo: hennen no bu* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1901–40), vol. 1, pp. 97–218; and in Takeuchi Rizō, ed., *Nara ibun* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 86–134.

9 Because only fragments of the Taihō code have been preserved, no single view has been generally accepted. The Taihō fragments are in the *Ryō no shūge*, KT, 23.363. For a more recent interpretation, see Torao, *Nihon kodai tochi hō shiron*, pp. 120–52.

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taxes.[10] The Taihō code provided for allotments to every individual over the age of six, but tax obligations were not governed by age.

2. In pre-T'ang China the only female commoners to receive allotments were married women, and they were explicitly required to pay taxes. During T'ang times, no female was entitled to an allotment. But in Japan all women commoners over the age of six were allotted two-thirds as much land as a male commoner was, and no mention was made of tax obligations.
3. The law of pre-T'ang dynasties called for allotments of land to slaves who were required to pay taxes, like commoners. But in Japan a slave received one-third as much land as a commoner did, and the law said nothing about his having to paying taxes.

These differences can be explained by the tendency of Chinese laws to hold the head of the household responsible for the payment of a poll tax, whereas Japanese law did not. In Japan, officials seemed to rely mainly on households for the collection of taxes, and attempts were made to supply these households, through allotments to individual members, with enough land to sustain the life of each person. Consequently, there was a rough correlation among the size of a household, the amount of land allotted to its members, and the tax burden.

Two types of taxes existed for a few decades after the Great Reform of 645: (1) a tax levied on each household, irrespective of the number, sex, age, and social position of its members and (2) a tax on land according to its size. After promulgation of the Asuka no Kiyomihara code in 689, Japan's tax system tended to shift from what was essentially a household tax to something like the Chinese poll tax, but the core of Japan's allotment system remained, leaving no direct linkage between allotments and taxes.

Nonallotted landholdings

Land left after allotments had been made was designated as surplus land (*jōden*) and placed under the jurisdiction of provincial governors who rented (*chinso*) it to farmers holding land allotments. This practice was not unlike the tenancy (*kosaku*) system that prevailed in Japanese farming villages before World War II. In both cases paddy land was rented to farmers in return for rent paid in kind. In Nara times this

10 Strictly speaking, land allotment and tax in pre-T'ang China were not perfectly joined, as a corvée exemption tax was not levied on female grantees of land during pre-T'ang dynasties. Only during the T'ang period, when women received no land and paid no taxes, were the two perfectly joined.

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TABLE 8.1
Nonallotment holdings

Type	Grantee	How worked	Taxes
Imperial domains[a] (*kanden*) (*tonden*)	Emperor or empress	Corvée labor	None
Rank land (*iden*)	Holders of the fifth rank and above	Rental (*chinso*)	Land tax
Temple land (*jiden*)	Buddhist temples	Slavery, hired labor, rental	None
Shrine land (*shinden*)	Shinto shrines	Slavery, hired labor, rental	None
Station land (*ekiden*)	Stations on the official transport system	Rental	None
Merit land[b] (*kōden*)	Meritorious individuals	Rental	Land tax
Imperially bestowed land (*shiden*)	Recipients named in an edict	Rental	Land tax
Office land (*shikibunden*):			
Central (*shikiden*)[a]	Major counselors and above	Rental	None
Provincial (*kugeden*)[a]	Dazaifu and provincial officials	Worked by servants at state expense	None
District (*shikiden*)	District officials	Rental, or family labor	Land tax

[a]A term used in the Taihō code.
[b]This type could be passed on to the next generation and even longer, for greater degrees of merit.

took two forms: an amount of rent (*chin*) paid to the provincial governor before planting or an amout of rice (*so*) handed over after harvest. The latter was generally preferred. It is estimated that a farmer working surplus land had to pay, as *chin* or *so*, about 20 percent of his crop. The provincial governors who received the rent were required to forward it to the Council of State in the capital, where it was used to defray administrative expenses.

Other types of nonallotted land included grants to the emperor, court nobles, government officials, temples and shrines, and meritorious individuals. The character of such grants, as set forth in the Yōrō code, is outlined in Table 8.1. Note that all nonallotment holdings, except those held directly by the emperor, were rented to persons who paid a fixed amount of rice as rent.

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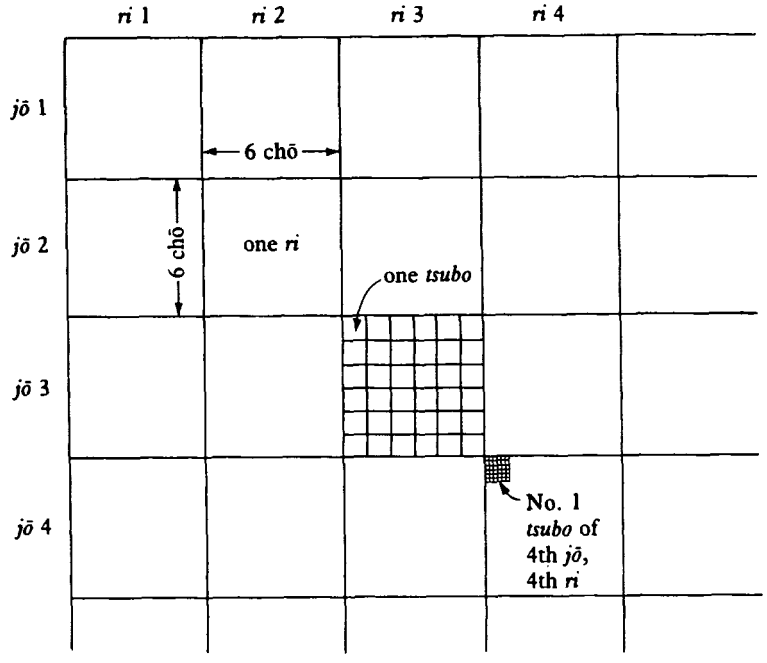

Figure 8.1. Grid in the Nara period for location and measurement of land. East–west strips, *jō;* north–south strips, *ri*. (Each *ri* is divided into thirty-six *tsubo*.) Linear measurement: 1 *chō* = 60 *bu* (107 meters). Area measurement: 1 *chō* = 10 *tan* = 3,600 *bu* (1,145 square meters), and 1 tan = 360 *bu* (114.5 square meters).

Description and measurement of land

Paddy land of all types, as well as other land allotments and grants, were divided into *jō* and *ri*, and these were subdivided into smaller units that were in turn re-subdivided. This made it possible to describe and measure particular plots more accurately.

Ideally the grid was segmented by east–west strips (*jō*) 642 meters wide and by north–south strips (*ri*) of equal width. Roads and waterways ran along both sides of all strips, giving cultivated areas of land a checkerboard appearance that can still be seen in many parts of Japan. A *ri* was 642 meters square and contained an area of 412,164 square meters (see Figure 8.1). The *ri* was divided into thirty-six *tsubo* (one *chō* containing ten *tan*), as shown in Figures 8.2 and 8.3. Thus a given piece of land might be described as "the second *tan* from the west in *tsubo* 2 of *ri* 4 in *jō* 6."

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The *chidori* system

1	12	13	24	25	36
2	11	14	23	26	35
3	10	15	22	27	34
4	9	16	21	28	33
5	8	17	20	29	32
6	7	18	19	30	31

The *heikō* system

1	7	13	19	25	31
2	8	14	20	26	32
3	9	15	21	27	33
4	10	16	22	28	34
5	11	17	23	29	35
6	12	18	24	30	36

Figure 8.2. The *tsubo* numbering systems. Each number (square) represents one *chō* subdivided into ten *tan*.

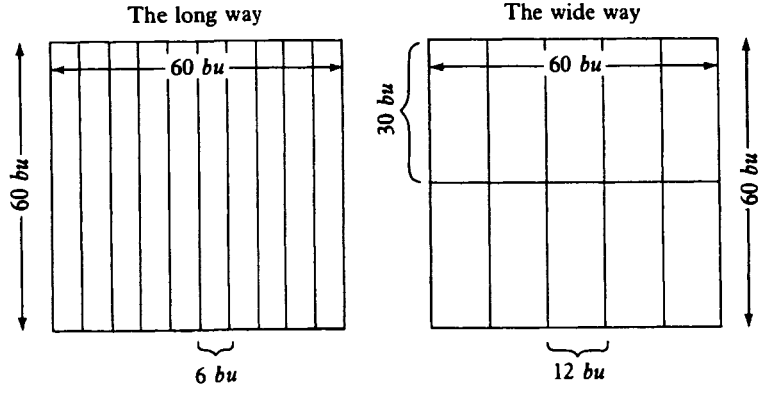

Figure 8.3. Divisions of *chō* into *tan*.

Just when the grid system was devised is not definitely known. But because it enabled the government to locate, measure, and record precisely a piece of allocated land, we believe that the grids came into general use in Nara times[11] and that as investigations show, they existed – marked off by roads or waterways on both sides of every strip – in an area extending from the plains of Akita Prefecture in the north to those of Kagoshima Prefecture in the south. We know, too, that grids were utilized when allocations were made. So we can view this system as a valued means for establishing governmental control

11 Kishi Toshio expresses a different view in his *Nihon kodai sekichō no kenkyū*, pp. 391–414, and his "Asuka to hōkaku jiwari," *Shirin* 53 (July 1970): 1–42.

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over the country's most productive plains, and its widespread use as testifying to the extensive power of the Nara state.

Allocation problems

The reallocation of land to all households throughout the country every six years proved to be such a troublesome administrative task that reallocation was apparently limited to households whose membership had increased or decreased during the previous six years. But in 729 the government ordered a readjustment in all provinces. It is thought that this ambitious project was implemented only in the area around the capital. But even there, the burden of implementation was quite onerous, as is suggested by a poem found in Japan's famous eighth-century anthology the *Man'yōshū,* lamenting the lot of an official, Tatsumaro, who had been assigned the task of adjusting land allotments in Settsu:

> But, while obedient to the Emperor's word,
> Night and morning he remained in wave-bright Naniwa,
> Until the year had passed
> Without leisure even to dry his sleeves,
> How thought he of his life?
> He left this dear and precious world
> As vanishes a drop of dew.
> Long enough before his time.[12]

Scholars have determined that Tatsumaro was driven to suicide by overwork on the adjustment of allocations and by the psychological strain of facing resistance from those who had received special land grants (such as office land, temple land, or shrine land) in Settsu.

The farmers seem to have faced the more serious problem of producing enough rice to keep themselves and their households from starving. Evidence showing the amount of land allotted to a single household is almost nonexistent, but we have portions of a 766 report from the governor of Echizen showing how one particular *chō* of land (10 *tan* or 1,145 square meters) in the northwestern part of Sakai District, Echizen Province, was allotted during the year of 761 to five households (see Table 8.2).[13] Such pieces of land were obviously too small to

12 As translated in Nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai, *The Manyoshu: One Thousand Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 186.

13 *Dai Nihon komonjo: Hennen no bu,* 5.554–617; Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo, ed., *Tōdai-ji monjo: Tōnan'in monjo* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1944–), vol. 2, pp. 187–244; and *Nara ibun,* 2.662–89.

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TABLE 8.2
Land allotment

Household	*tan*		*bu*	
1	6	and	123	
2	0	and	209	
3	0	and	155	
4	2	and	116	
5	0	and	117	
Total	8	and	720	(10 *tan* or 1 *chō*)

produce enough rice to feed all members of an average-sized household, suggesting that some individuals held allotments elsewhere.

Research on the composition of farm households in Nara times indicates that a typical household was made up of thirteen persons: five males and six females over six, and two children (one male and one female) under six. Because the children under six did not receive allotments, the holdings of a hypothetical household amounted to 18 *tan* (1.8 *chō*): 2 *tan* for each of the five males and 1.33 *tan* for each of the six females over six.[14] In those days high-grade land was expected to yield 500 sheaves per *chō* (about 1,800 liters of rice), and middle-grade land would produce 400 sheaves, providing an average annual household income of 810 sheaves. But 36 of these 810 sheaves (20 per *chō*) would have been used for seeding and another 27 (15 per *chō*) for taxes. This provided 747 sheaves (yielding approximately 2,689 liters of rice) for members of the household to live on during the coming year, not enough to sustain life for thirteen persons. Remembering that a household had other burdens, such as supplying corvée labor, we can be quite certain that the yield from a household allotment was not sufficient to meet the basic needs of its members. Note, too, that these estimates are based on the assumption that individual allotments were as stipulated in the codes, but we know that some areas did not have enough land to go around and that allotments had to be reduced accordingly.[15]

Nara period households did have additional sources of income.

14 Sawada Goichi, *Nara chō jidai minsei keizai no sūteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Fuzambō, 1927).

15 Torao, *Handen shūju*, pp. 245–9. The rice yield during this period is the subject of considerable controversy. Early work on it was done by Sawada Goichi, *Nara chō jidai minsei keizai no sūteki kenkyū*, and by Takigawa Masajirō, *Ritsuryō jidai no nōmin seikatsu* (Tokyo: Dōjinsha, 1943), pp. 77–82. Takigawa calculated that the average daily consumption by a male was 0.24 sheaves of rice, and by a female 0.20 sheaves (p. 95). Miyahara Takeo reached conclusions different from mine in his *Nihon kodai no kokka to nōmin*, pp. 254–77.

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Land could be rented from other farmers or from government officials, and household members might turn to slash-and-burn agriculture or to the dry farming of millet, barley, or wheat. An increasing body of evidence suggests that such secondary occupations as fishing and forestry also served to supplement a family's income, as did hunting and gathering. But such gains probably did not offset the losses caused by drought and storm. The *Shoku Nihongi* (a court chronicle of the eighth century) reports poor crops in one section or another of Japan almost every year. So the income of a household was not only meager but also unstable, making the lot of a Nara farmer a harsh one indeed.[16]

CONTROL OF PERSONS

The people of Nara Japan were classified by law as commoners (*ryōmin*) or slaves (*semmin*). Laws prohibited a person from marrying outside his or her class and prescribed much more severe punishments for crimes committed by slaves. But slaves made up less than 10 percent of the population and were not the country's main producers.

Slaves

The slave class was divided by law into five subgroups according to types of ownership and degrees of freedom. The first subgroup was state slaves (*kanko*) owned by the central government. They could have families and could use a portion of their labor for themselves. The second subgroup was private slaves (*ke'nin*) owned by commoners. They had as much freedom as did state slaves. The third was state chattel slaves (*kunuhi*) owned by the central government. They were treated as property that could be bought and sold. The fourth subgroup was private chattel slaves (*shinuhi*) owned by commoners. They were otherwise treated like state chattel slaves. And the fifth was the imperial-mausolea slaves (*ryōko*) owned by officials. They were used to protect and maintain the tombs of deceased emperors and empresses.

Private slaves (*ke'nin*) are not mentioned in extant household registers or other records of the eighth century, and we find only scattered references to them in legal provisions of that and the following centu-

16 William Wayne Farris concluded that epidemics and inadequate irrigation technology drove the peasants from their land and created unsettled farming conditions; see his *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900* (*Harvard–Yenching Monograph Series* no. 24) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp.74–117.

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ries. We therefore assume that private slaves were not numerous and that imperial-mausolea slaves were ranked about as high as commoners were, as they were despised only because of the work they did. Commoners, on the other hand, included artisan groups (*shinabe*) that were much like slaves. The largest slave subgroup was private chattel slaves, who were owned mainly by temples, shrines, public officials, and wealthy farmers. One private chattel slave, according to contemporary sources, had roughly the value of a strong horse or cow.[17]

Holders of court rank

Commoners were divided between those who held court ranks and those who did not, roughly between the rulers and the ruled. There was some mobility between the two groups, but the legal distinctions were clear and significant.

Holders of court ranks held public office, the highest posts being reserved for those with the highest rank. These favored commoners did not simply occupy positions of political control but also obtained incomes appropriate to their rank and office. They were also exempt from all taxes, except those levied on land grants accompanying the conferral of rank or office. When convicted of a crime, they received lighter sentences and were allowed less onerous ways of serving sentences.

Holders of court rank were, in turn, divided between elite court-connected aristocrats who held the top fourteen ranks (senior first rank through junior fifth rank lower grade) of the thirty defined by law, and lower-ranking nobles who held the bottom sixteen ranks (senior sixth rank upper grade through lesser bottom rank lower grade). All the holders of the highest fourteen ranks were men born into a few powerful *uji* (clans) associated with the court, blocking all others from positions of effective political control. This elite group numbered no more than 250 in a population of between 5 million and 6 million. At the upper level were a few persons who monopolized the highest six ranks of junior third rank and above, held the highest offices, and received the most favored treatment. If one of these aristocrats were senior second rank (third from the top) and held the post of minister of the left, he would be entitled to 60 *chō* of land for his rank, 30 *chō* for his office, and 2,200 households (200 for his rank and 2,000 for his office). He also received extra spring and fall stipends and used

17 For additional detail, see Takigawa Masajirō, *Ritsuryō semminsei no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1967).

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officials and messengers at state expense. His landholdings of 90 *chō* equaled the total amount of land allotted to 450 male commoners. Because he received all the produce taxes (*chō*) paid by 2,200 households, and one-half of their land tax (*denso*), his total income was roughly that of a small province.

Strictly speaking, ranks were granted to individuals, and an individual was promoted to a high office only after the lapse of a fixed period of time and after his service record had been considered. But in practice, hereditary rights were enjoyed by sons of officials of the fourth and fifth ranks and by sons and grandsons of officials of the third rank and above. Thus offices of the fifth rank and above tended to go to the descendants of aristocrats who had held posts at that same high level. Although ostensibly granted to individuals, they were consistently held by members of the same court-connected clans.

Below these high-born aristocrats of fifth rank and above were low-ranking nobles who, in most cases, were members of the local gentry. Because they were granted court ranks and public offices, they too were rulers, but definitely subordinate to the elite aristocrats at or above the fifth rank. Most lower-ranking nobles were descendants of local leaders who had maintained, generation after generation, control over people in an outlying region. Elite aristocrats had to rely on these local gentry when attempting to extend their control. Thus influential members of the local gentry were incorporated into the state's administrative structure through the award of court ranks below the fifth rank and such local government offices as that of district supervisor. Elite aristocrats always placed their own kind in regional offices, producing linkages with local gentry that strengthened state control over outlying regions. So while occupying the highest ranks and positions at the capital, court aristocrats collaborated with, and sometimes became rivals of, gentry officials holding local government posts.

Nonholders of court rank

Commoners who were not awarded court ranks or appointed to public offices were mainly farmers to whom rice land had been allotted. They were the producers of the goods and services that provided most of the state's income. These commoners (the ruled) were permitted to carry on their agricultural work in autonomous groups and to enjoy certain freedoms. But because the state controlled their irrigation systems, they were not truly free.

The basic commoner group, a household or *ko*, was not precisely a

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family. Household heads (*koshu*) were held responsible for making households function as units through which the state could control commoners. Extant household registers of the Nara period indicate, however, that most households were made up of blood relatives. Modern scholars are inclined to think that during the sixth and seventh centuries, cooperative communities (*kyōdō-tai*) included several families but were dominated by one and that the government made these communities into households for the purpose of facilitating its control.[18] By Nara times, households stood at the base of the state's control system.

Around 50 households were included in an administrative village (*ri*). Historical sources of the period provide a fair number of cases in which one *ri* had precisely 50 households. But after the government altered its local administrative structure in 715, two types of villages and two types of households came into existence.[19] A large administrative village made up of two or three smaller villages (*ri*) was called a *gō*. At the same time, two or three small households (*bōko*) made up a larger household called a *gōko*. So two new units were added to the old administrative structure: a smaller village and a smaller household. According to a 721 household register for the Ōshima administrative village (*gō*) in the Katsushika District of Shimofusa, Ōshima included three small villages (*ri*), 50 large households (*gōko*), and 130 small households (*bōko*). The total registered population was 1,191. An average large household therefore had fewer than 24 persons, and a small one had 9. The average size of a family seems also to have been around 9 or more persons, a conclusion supported by recent archaeological investigations. For example, on the border between the Nerima and Itabashi wards of Tokyo, archaeologists have found fifteen pit dwellings that date from the seventh or eighth centuries and that have floor space ranging between 7.6 and 33 square meters each, an average of 16 square meters. A dwelling usually had an oven built into one of the walls, which suggests that it was used by a single family.[20] The floor space of 16 square meters was about right for a typical family of 9. Archaeologists think there were between thirty and forty dwellings in

18 Kadowaki Teiji, *Nihon kodai kyōdōtai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1960). For a critique of Kadowaki's conclusions, see Urata Akiko, "Henkosei no igi," *Shigaku zasshi* 81 (February 1972): 28–76.

19 The 715 ordinance is no longer extant, but the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* refers to it; see NKBT 2.96.

20 Nakagawa Shigeo, and Kawamura Kiichi, eds., *Kurihara: The Report of the Excavation of the Archeology Sites at St. Paul's Green Heights* (Tokyo: Faculty of Letters of Rikkyō University Press, 1957).

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the group, about the number in a small village (*ri*). Some scholars conclude that the changes in the organization of villages and households made in 715 arose from a tendency of families to become more independent – to break away from traditional communities and to function as separate households.[21] But in 739, before the lapse of a quarter of a century, the 715 alterations were rescinded. I am therefore not certain about the validity of the view that the changes of 715 reflect greater family independence.

Two sources provide information on the life of Nara period households and villages. First, the household registers (*koseki*) prepared for each household every six years showed whether persons of a household were commoners or slaves, and they supplied the information needed for making reallocations of land every six years. The second source is the yearly tax registers (*keichō*) that recorded payments of produce taxes and labor levies (*chōyō*). The tax registers were, of course, linked with the household registers. Both were prepared by provincial officials and sent to the capital. Large numbers were undoubtedly kept, but only a few are extant.

By studying what remains of the household and tax registers, we can deduce that families of eighth-century Japan had a strong patrilineal character. But the compilers of these documents may well have been influenced by the tendency to accept the Chinese family system as a model. On the basis of other evidence, such as poems found in the *Man'yōshū*, some think that a matrilineal family system also existed. Some historians are therefore inclined to see an earlier Japanese matrilineal system within the Chinese patrilineal model. For example, in the earlier years of marriage, a woman did not live with her husband but received nocturnal visits from him (*tsumadoikon*), or he moved in. The wife did not change her name or *uji* (clan) affiliation after marriage. And their children were registered under the *uji* name of the father, although they were brought up in the mother's household.[22]

The *Man'yōshū* contains several poems that refer to marriages of this sort:

> Wading the Hase River
> in the twilight
> I draw near
> to my true love's door.

21 Kadowaki, *Nihon kodai kyōdōtai no kenkyū*.
22 Takamure Itsue, *Shōseikon no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1953).

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Can only a spring rain so drench
your garments through?
If it rains for seven days,
Will you not come for seven nights?

Go not away, dear heart,
So late in the night.
The hoar frost is on the leaves
of the dense bamboo-grass by the land.

But another *Man'yōshū* poem suggests that married couples lived together:

With my parents at my pillow
My wife and children at my feet,
All huddled in grief and tears.[23]

It seems that when living together, couples might be either at the home of the wife's parents or at that of the husband's, but usually the former.[24]

With respect to the inheritance of a rank holder's property, the Taihō statutes of 701 stipulated that the eldest son would inherit his father's property, as in Chinese law. But he was not to receive everything. He got the house, the chattel slaves (except those brought into the household by the deceased's wife), and one-half of all other property, with the remainder being divided equally among his brothers. The later Yōrō code reduced the eldest son's proportion of the inheritance to twice that of any brother and also recognized inheritance by daughters (half that received by brothers). Nothing, however, is said about inheritance in commoner families that had no court rank, but each member seems to have inherited an equal portion.

CONTROL OF STATE FINANCES AND EXCHANGE

The state's financial arrangements were devised in accordance with the principle that the state should collect enough taxes in kind to meet its operating costs. Taxes paid by farmers who had received land allotments were of two types: a portion of the rice produced and a portion of the articles made. Produce such as hemp cloth paid for by a

23 The above *Man'yōshū* poems are nos. 1917, 2336, and 892 in Nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai, trans., *The Man'yōshū*, pp. 294, 297–8, 206.

24 See Hirata Kōji, "Kodai sekichō ni arawaretaru nōmin no kon'in keitai ni tsuite," *Shigaku zasshi* 74 (November 1965): 25–58; Itō Sumiko, "Nara jidai no kon'in ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu," *Kokka gakkai zasshi* 72 (May 1958): 14–59, and 73 (January 1959): 1–54; Emori Itsuo, *Boken to fuken* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1973); Yoshida Takashi, "Ritsuryō-sei to sonraku," in *Kodai*, vol. 3 of *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi*, pp. 141–200.

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land grantee was transported to the capital where government officials might authorize its disbursement as payment for an aristocrat's stipend or a laborer's wage. Provincial officials therefore functioned within the financial system of the central government. But they could demand corvée labor and military service, thereby giving them a measure of independence.[25]

The principal elements in the state's financial arrangements were as follows:

1. Taxes of four types: (a) land taxes (*denso*), (b) produce taxes (*chō*), (c) produce paid in lieu of a labor levy (*yō*), and (d) interest on state loans (*kō-suiko*). All were collected by provincial officials.
2. Rice submitted in payment of taxes or as interest on state loans of rice stored in provincial warehouses (state rice or *shōzei*) and was used to pay both the normal and extraordinary expenses of local government.
3. Produce or goods paid in lieu of labor levies sent to the capital at taxpayer's expense. Some provinces were asked to send a portion of their "state rice" to the central government for supplying food to courtiers (*nenryō shōmai*). Extra payments might also be requested to help cover the needs of the aristocrats, the court, or the central government as a whole.

Land taxes

Land taxes were assessed according to the size of a paddy field. As stipulated in the Taihō code, twenty-two sheaves were collected from one *chō* of paddy land. But because the legal "sheaf" was defined without regard to existing customs and was unrealistic, collections were made in terms of the customary sheaf: fifteen sheafs per *chō*. But in 706 the customary sheaf was made the legal one. Because a *chō* of land would normally produce between three hundred and five hundred sheaves, the land tax ranged between 3 and 5 percent of the yield.[26]

25 Studies of financial arrangements of this period were made by Murao Jirō, *Ritsuryō zaisei shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961); Aoki Kazuo, "Ritsuryō zaisei," in *Kodai* of *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi*, 3.115–46; Hayakawa Shōhachi, "Ritsuryō zaisei no kōzō to sono henshitsu," in Iyanaga Teizō, ed., vol. 1 of *Nihon Keizai shi taikei* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1965), pp. 221–80; Kanō Hisashi, "Ritsuryō zaisei no kikō," in *Kodai* of *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi*, 3.100–39. Studies of trade were made by Yoshida Takashi, *Ritsuryō kokka to kodai no shakai* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1983), pp. 289–347; Sakaehara Towao, "Nara jidai no ryūtsū keizai," *Shirin* 55 (July 1972): 18–60.

26 My usage of the term *sheaf* is in accord with contemporary usage, not as defined in the codes.

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Produce tax (chō) *and produce paid in lieu of the labor levy* (yō)

The *chō* and *yō* taxes, major features of the Nara-period tax system, were collected from adult males between the ages of seventeen and sixty-five. The amount varied with age and was largest for men between twenty-one and sixty. Produce taxes were paid in kind on goods produced locally and required by the central government. These were mainly textiles, especially silk and hemp cloth, but also included dyes, lacquer, paper, and salt. Produce submitted in lieu of labor levies was usually hemp cloth or rice, which was used to cover the cost of labor needed at the capital. The burden of transporting these products was also borne by the farmers.

The Taihō code stipulated that farmers living in four (later five) provinces around the capital (the Kinai) were not required to pay either of these two taxes at the full rate. These fortunate people had to pay only one-half of the produce tax and were exempt from the substitute tax. But they were often forced to work for the central government as hired workers (*kōeki*). In 706, however, the labor substitute tax was reduced by one-half throughout the country.

State loans (kō-suiko)

Interest-bearing loans were of two types: loans of rice or other consumer products made by private individuals (*shi-suiko*), often at rates as high as 100 percent per year, and state loans (*kō-suiko*), which took the form of rice loans made by local officials. The latter were usually made in the winter or spring and were repaid at harvest time with an interest charge of 50 percent. Various theories have been advanced regarding the origin of rice loans, but none has yet received general acceptance. In principle, local government officials made loans of seed rice in the spring to farmers who needed them and then demanded repayment at harvest time. Realizing that seed rice could also be used for food, that such loans ensured the production of a new crop, that private loans were costly, and that local government loans were often canceled whenever a borrower died, one can think of state loans as a form of public welfare. But it is also clear that the receipt of interest on them became an important source of state revenue.[27] In 795 the rate of interest was reduced to 30 percent.

27 See Sonoda Kōyū, "Suiko," in Osaka Rekishi gakkai, ed., *Ritsuryō kokka no kiso kōzō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1960), pp. 397–466; and Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land*, pp. 65–69.

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Labor services

In addition to bearing the obligation of handing over a portion of what they produced or made to the state, adult male farmers had to supply labor of various types. First, the provincial office had the right to conscript adult males as a miscellaneous labor levy (*zōyō*). Restricted to no more than sixty days per year, these levies were normally used for local construction projects. But Nara records indicate that by the middle of the eighth century, many provincial officials openly abused farmers by forcing them to work on private projects. In 757 the miscellaneous labor levy was reduced to thirty days per year.

The second type of service was military conscription. The Taihō code states that each household had to provide one soldier (*heishi*) for every four of its able-bodied males between the ages of twenty-one and sixty. But the Yōrō code raised this to one for every three. Conscripts were placed in units that had either a military or a police function. A unit was divided into ten companies (*ban*) that provided, in turn, ten days' service each. Although draftees were freed from other forms of labor service, they had to provide their own food and weapons, making such service quite onerous. A household could obtain exemption from the *zōyō* or *yō* tax by providing *heishi*, but the latter was even more onerous. An early-ninth-century order from the Council of State lamented that "a household is doomed if one of its men is drafted."[28]

The third kind of labor service was a member of the palace guards (*eji*), who were assembled for duty at the court. The limitation of such service to one year was not necessarily respected. Consequently, we read of such complaints as "I went to the capital as a guard in the prime of life but returned home with white hair."[29] A related duty was for the defense of a border area of northern Kyushu (*sakimori*), for which men were sent from distant points of eastern Japan. The tour was limited to three years, but again, the limitation was not necessarily respected, causing misery for households that provided guards. The number of persons in a unit was not firmly fixed: Documents of 738 suggest a figure around 2,300.[30] Nor do we know why guards were assigned to duty so far from home. A *Man'yōshū* poem reflects the feelings of such a person:

> But in dread obedience to the imperial command
> I started out on the road,
> Looking back many times from the corner of each hill.

28 Council of State order of Tenchō 3 (826) 11/3, *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, KT 25. 553–5.
29 *Shoku Nihongi*, chap. 9, Yōrō 6 (722) 2/23, KT 2.91.
30 *Dai Nihon komonjo*, 2.106–46; *Nara ibun*, 1.231–2, 221–32, 252–62, 267–8.

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Having left my dear ones far behind,
My mind knew no rest
While the pain of longing wrung my heart.
Mortal creature as I am,
How could I be sure of my life?[31]

Labor service for projects at the capital was of two types. The first was for daily work in government offices, for which unskilled laborers (*shichō*) were conscripted at the rate of two persons per fifty households. In return for three years of work, a laborer gained exemption from most taxes and assessments. The major supply of labor for the capital was obtained, however, by hired laborers (*kōeki*). We know that hired laborers were used for construction projects at the Heijō, Shigaraki, and Kuni capitals and at various temples and shrines. These men were compensated with money and food. Several contracts for work of this kind exist in the Shōsō-in document collection, but they do not show how much freedom the hired laborers had to refuse conscription.[32]

Commercial exchange

Most exchange in Nara times was associated with the government's collection of goods and services from outlying areas. The basic movement of goods was therefore from those areas to the capital. Peasants and their provincial guides transported cloth, iron, salt, silk, and other products to the capital where they were used by officials or exchanged for goods, services, or cash with which to pay stipends. Such exchange took place at two state-run markets (the Eastern and the Western) in the capital, which were centers of a vast commercial network that included markets, ports, and stations in neighboring provinces. The government issued laws for fixing prices and establishing standards of weights and measures, and it even decided when stores were to open and close. Each province had its own market, located near the provincial headquarters, that was linked with a number of local trading posts.

As Japanese aristocrats became more deeply interested in T'ang

31 *Man'yōshū*, no. 4408, trans. in Nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai, *The Man'yōshū*, p. 177. This poem was composed in 755 by Ōtomo no Yakamochi while he was reviewing troops.

32 For example, see *Dai Nihon komonjo*, 15.357–64. Construction projects of that day are discussed in Fukuyama Toshio, *Nihon kenchiku shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Bokusui shobō, 1943). The freedom of contract was studied by Asaka Toshiki, *Nihon kodai shukōgyō shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hōsei University Press, 1971); Naoki Kōjirō, *Nara jidai shi no sho mondai* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1968), pp. 108–19.

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culture, they were drawn to the utility of metallic money. Coins were probably minted in the closing years of the seventh century. In 708, silver and copper coins, inscribed with *Wadō kaichin*, were minted. Although the minting of silver coins was discontinued the following year, copper coins remained in circulation throughout the Nara period. But we cannot say that a highly developed money economy had emerged, for most exchanges were in terms of rice.

The government gave special attention to the development of copper mining, establishing several offices of the mint (*jusenshi*) in western Japan where the copper mines were located. Because the government was making a serious attempt to stimulate the acceptance and use of officially minted coins, it listed punishments for private coining that were much more severe than those inflicted for the same offense in China. Various measures also were taken to stimulate the circulation of coins. For example, local produce taxes of the Kinai area had to be paid in copper coins, as were the salaries of laborers hired for construction work at the capital. But despite such efforts to stimulate the circulation of copper coins, their use was limited largely to areas around the capital. Even there, not all accounts were settled in terms of copper coins, as rice continued to be the dominant medium of exchange.

In attempting to increase circulation of the *Wadō kaichin* the government established rates at which coins were to be exchanged for rice. We do not know what those rates were until 711, three years after the *Wadō kaichin* were first issued, when one copper coin (*mon*) was valued at six *shō* of rice.[33] Because this revision was made when the government was endeavoring to stimulate circulation, the earlier value may have been as low as five *shō* per coin.

Historical evidence of exchange activity by merchants during the Nara period is scanty, but they were definitely operating within the trade networks just outlined. It is assumed that the merchants' activity increased as more accounts were settled with copper money serving as the medium of exchange. The *Nihon ryōiki*, a collection of Nara period Buddhist tales, contains a story about a resident of Nara who borrowed thirty strings of copper coins (one thousand to a string) from the Daian-ji and then went to the port of Tsuruga in Echizen to buy goods to sell at the capital. On his way back he got sick while transporting his purchases across Lake Biwa. Then, as the story goes, he met three demons who had been sent to entice him into hell. But by presenting the

33 One *shō* at that time was the equivalent of 0.4 of a modern *shō*, or 0.72 liter.

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demons with food, he was able to avoid certain death.[34] Although this tale is largely fictitious, the portion preceding the appearance of the demons reveals certain aspects of the current commercial situation. From it we can deduce that a great official temple (the Daian-ji) was engaged in the business of lending copper coins for gain, that Tsuruga – a harbor facing the Japan Sea – was a place where goods were bought for sale at the capital, that copper coins were used for consummating transactions, that ships were hauling goods across Lake Biwa, and that shipowners accepted copper coins for services rendered.

The *Nihon ryōiki* contains other stories that touch on merchants' activities. One refers to large ships loaded with goods plying the Kusatsu River in Owari Province. Another mentions a market along the upper reaches of the same river, this time in Mino Province where ships were anchored. From these references it becomes clear that goods were being tranported by water and that such trade must have become more active as the finances of the central government became more dependent on exchange. And yet the commercial class was still in its infancy, for we know that bureaucrats also acted as merchants. One Ato no Otari, a low-ranking official of the Bureau for the Construction of Tōdai-ji, bought goods directly from commoners with his own money and sold them to the bureau.[35]

POLICY CHANGES

Japanese economic and social institutions functioned in rather close accord with the original *ritsuryō* codes during the first three decades of the eighth century, although minor code revisions were made. But after 730, legal enactments reflect a fundamental change of policy. Particularly significant were the state's recognition of private possession of rice land in perpetuity, the granting of legal status to vagrants, and changes in the state-loan system.

Land tenure

An agricultural society supported by paddy field rice production is constantly faced with two basic problems: how to restore the cultivation of rice on land that has been turned into wasteland by such

34 *Nihon ryōiki*, NKBT 70.246–50; translated by Nakamura Kyōko Motomichi, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

35 For more detail, see Yoshida, "Ritsuryō jidai no kōeki," pp. 376–83.

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natural disasters as flood or drought and how to increase the amount of land under cultivation. But the Taihō and Yōrō codes contain only one article that touches on these problems.[36] In regard to the reclamation of wasteland, a distinction was made between private land (*shiden*) and state land (*kōden*). The former was personal-share land possessed and used by farmers, whereas the latter, classified as surplus land (*jōden*), was unallocated land that was a source of income for the state. When a piece of private land was abandoned, another farmer was allowed to recultivate it and to enjoy its yield for three years, after which it was returned to the state. A farmer who brought state wasteland back into cultivation could keep what was produced for six years, and then he was required to turn over the land to provincial authorities.

The problem of developing virgin land was more complicated. The code merely stipulated that a provincial governor might open and benefit from fields opened up during his incumbency. At the end of his term of office, such land was to be returned to the state. Surprisingly, the statute does not stipulate the conditions under which court nobles or farmers might develop virgin land. Silence on this point should not be mistaken, however, for prohibition. It was only natural that farmers should have been interested in expanding their fields, and the government in increasing its income. We assume, therefore, that peasants were customarily permitted to convert nearby land into paddy fields, probably gaining possession of such land for life, as in the case of personal-share land. In general, land development was undertaken by the state and was represented in local areas by provincial and district officials. The involvement of court aristocrats in land development was prohibited, but local peasants faced no such law, receiving usufructuary rights to the paddy fields that they developed.[37]

Because it was difficult to gain private possession of cultivated land, powerful aristocrats and local gentry were, not surprisingly, drawn to illegal methods of obtaining and developing virgin land. An edict issued in the twelfth month of 711 strictly prohibited activity that would decrease the income that farmers obtained from uncultivated common land.[38] But the edict nevertheless allowed a court aristocrat, or member of the local gentry, to request through a provincial governor permission to cultivate a piece of virgin land at his own personal expense. The very existence of the stipulation indicates that the state,

36 *Ryō no shūge*, KT 23.370–2. 37 Ibid., p. 372.
38 *Shoku Nihongi*, Wadō 4 (711), 12/6 KT 2.47.

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finding it impossible to prohibit all invasions of common land, was yielding to the aristocrats' land hunger and, at the same time, trying to increase the amount of arable land. Twelve years later, in 723, a new law ruled that some newly developed land could be privately possessed by the developer and passed on to his descendants for three generations, but only during the lifetime of the developer if an irrigation system was already in existence.[39]

One year before this law was issued, a plan had been devised for opening up a million *chō* of land for rice production. Because ninth- and tenth-century documents suggest that the total amount of land under cultivation was then about a million *chō*, the implementation of this ambitious plan would have doubled Japan's arable land. But it was merely a paper plan. The 723 law may have been issued because the plan of the previous year could not be implemented, although we have no definite proof of a link between the two. A shortage of rice land undoubtedly lay behind the 723 law, which served to benefit farmers who had opened up virgin land near their allotments. But the law may also have been prompted by the demands of aristocrats who had the capital and labor needed for building irrigation systems. Finally, there was a persistent demand for land, which the government may have been unable to satisfy. Prince Nagaya, as head of the anti-Fujiwara faction, had risen to the highest seat of authority after the death of Fujiwara no Fuhito in 720. In order to maintain his position in the face of opposition from Fuhito's descendants, he must have been impelled to buy ruling-class support by favoring legislation that would permit the private possession of land. We should note, however, that the law of 723 was only a compromise with the principles of state control: Eventually all fields had to be returned to the state. The old one-generation restriction still applied to personal-share land, and the new three-generation rule was modeled on earlier rights extended to holders of "upper-merit land" (*jōkōden*). Thus the *ritsuryō* land system was by no means dead.

Nara records tell us little about land development after 723. It is unlikely, however, that many new fields were brought under cultivation as a result of the new provision. Restrictions incorporated into the law probably reduced its effectiveness. But twenty years later another edict drastically reduced these restrictions and enabled private individuals to hold rice land in perpetuity.[40] The 743 edict, like the one

39 *Shoku Nihongi*, Yōrō 7 (723), 4/17 KT 2.96.

40 Several texts of this law are extant, but the best one is in the *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō 15 (743), 5/27 KT 2.174. The text also can be found in the *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, KT 25.441, and in the *Ryō no shūge*, KT 23.372.

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issued in 723, arose out of a new situation in court politics. Now Tachibana no Moroe (684–757) was the dominant political figure, and he, like Prince Nagaya before him, was forced to make it easier for aristocrats and religious institutions to become private owners of rice land. Until 743, only one person had ever had private possession of land in perpetuity: Fujiwara no Kamatari (614–69), founder of the Fujiwara clan and a prominent post-645 reformer who had received a grant of "great-merit land" (*daikōden*). But the edict of 743 made it possible for aristocrats generally to acquire private ownership of land and to pass it on to their descendants, thereby altering the course of economic history in fundamental ways.

State recognition of the private and permanent tenure of rice land meant that two opposing principles prevailed: the old principle that the state allocated and reallocated rice land already under cultivation and the new principle of private ownership by persons who had developed land. That is, in a given village some land was designated as personal-share land, or surplus land, in accordance with the *ritsuryō* principle of state control, and all other land was newly cultivated land that was privately owned. It became increasingly difficult to disentangle the two, making it hard for governmental authorities to preserve the land allotment system.

The 743 edict also altered the meaning of the terms "private land" (*shiden*) and "state land" (*kōden*). According to earlier law, private land was that with a specific usufructuary, most of which was personal-share allotments but included plots of land distributed to persons holding public offices and ranks. State land, on the other hand, was rice land without a specific usufructuary and consisting mainly of surplus fields (*jōden*). But the 743 law gave "private land" a new meaning: fields privately owned in perpetuity and recognized by the state. State land, on the other hand, was now personal-share fields temporarily allotted to individuals in accordance with the old *ritsuryō* system. Whereas previous laws distinguished between private and state land in terms of the presence or absence of usufructuary rights, the 743 law did so in terms of private possession and state control.

Another change ushered in by the 743 law arose from persons being permitted to cultivate an amount of land determined by political status: An official of the first rank could develop five hundred *chō* of land, but a person without rank could develop only ten. It is possible to think of this change as adding another restriction to those incorporated in the 723 law. Some scholars believe this explains why the 743 law was issued. Earlier codes had not dealt with the question of land

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development, but if they had, limits on the amount of land that a single individual could bring under cultivation would probably have been deemed necessary. Therefore Yoshida Takashi concluded that although the 743 law destroyed basic features of the *ritsuryō* land law, it emerged from problems with the law's administration.[41] By making it clear that the 743 regulation was an attempt to resolve such problems, Yoshida made an important contribution. But the 743 restrictions were loose and were probably not enforced. Restrictions on the amount of land that temples could develop were not even spelled out, and after 743, large amounts of new rice land appeared.[42]

Some two decades later, in 765 when the court was dominated by the Buddhist priest Dōkyō (d. 772) and pro-Buddhist policies were being adopted, land development by non-Buddhist institutions or aristocratic individuals was prohibited.[43] Development by Buddhist temples was, on the other hand, implicitly approved. But when Dōkyō fell from power in 770, the provisions of the 743 law were apparently restored.[44] Records show that during the remaining century and a quarter of *ritsuryō* history, the amount of land brought under cultivation increased continuously and markedly.

In looking back over changes in land policy, we see two distinct periods of land system disintegration. First is the period after 743 when individuals or religious institutions were permitted to possess newly developed rice land personally and in perpetuity. This period ended in 801 when the interval between allotments was lengthened from six to twelve years.[45] The second period lasted from about 800 to the early tenth century when the *ritsuryō* land system virtually disappeared. A study of household registers and land allotment records down to 800 provides results shown in Table 8.3. Two points should be made about these figures. First, with only two exceptions, a census was taken every six years. Second, the length of time between a census and the following allotment was at first two years but by 800 was lengthened to six.

Before 743, when reallotments were carried out regularly, they were made two years after each census. But after the 743 edict, when the

41 Yoshida Takashi, *Ritsuryō kokka to kodai no shakai*, pp. 289–347.

42 Farris considers the great smallpox epidemic of 735–7 to have been the major factor in the government's decision to eliminate restrictions on tenure; see *Population, Disease and Land*, pp. 64–81.

43 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Jingo 1 (765) 3/5, 2.319.

44 *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, Council of State order, Hōki 3 (772) 10/14, KT, 25.441.

45 *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, Council of State, Enryaku 20 (801) 6/5, which is cited in an order issued by the Council of State order, Jōwa 1 (834) 2/3, KT 25.427.

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TABLE 8.3
Population registration and land allocation in the seventh and eighth centuries

Registration year	(A)	Allocation year	(B)	Years between A and B
Jitō 4	(690)	Jitō	(692)	2
Jitō 10[a]	(696)	Mommu 2[c]	(698)	2
Taihō 2	(702)	Keiun 1[c]	(704)	2
Wadō 1	(708)	Wadō 3[c]	(710)	2
Wadō 7	(714)	Reiki 2[c]	(716)	2
Yōrō 5[b]	(721)	Yōrō 7	(723)	2
Jinki 4	(727)	Tempyō 1	(729)	2
Tempyō 5	(733)	Tempyō[c,d]	(735)	2
Tempyō 12[b]	(740)	Tempyō 14	(742)	2
Tempyō 18	(746)	Tempyō 21	(749)	3
Tempyō Shōhō 4	(752)	Tempyō Shōhō	(755)	3
Tempyō Hōji 2	(758)	Tempyō Hōji 5	(761)	3
Tempyō Hōji 8[c]	(764)	Jingo Keiun 1	(767)	3
Hōki 1[c]	(770)	Hōki 4	(773)	3
Hōki 7[c]	(776)	Hōki 10[c]	(779)	3
Enryaku 1	(782)	Enryaku 5	(786)	4
Enryaku 7	(788)	Enryaku 11	(792)	4
Enryaku 13[c]	(794)	Enryaku 19	(800)	6
Enryaku 19	(800)	–		–

[a]Some believe that this registration was made in the previous year.
[b]Exceptions to the rule that a registration should be held every six years. The first is explained by the implementation of the ordinance of 715, and the second, by the rescission of that law in 739.
[c]Years for which there is no evidence that a household registration, or land allotment, was carried out; but years when a registration or allocation was due.
[d]A recently discovered wooden tablet (*mokkan*) in the city of Takatsuki suggests that there was a land allotment there in 735.

provision for private possession was enacted, the *ritsuryō* system became increasingly difficult to implement. As the amounts of privately held and newly cultivated land increased – backed by powerful temples and aristocrats anxious to develop new fields – proprietary relationships became tangled. New low-yield fields were mixed with old high-yield ones, and scattered privately held fields were mixed with those that were state controlled. Because of such proprietary complications, investigations of rice fields were obstructed, and as Table 8.3 shows, more years passed before new allocations could be made. The allotment of rice land to those recorded in the 794 census did not begin until 800, by which time the next census was due.

An attempt was made in 801 to solve the problem by extending the interval between allotments from six to twelve years. This was an extraordinary measure that in effect omitted one allotment in order to

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normalize the interval bewteen a census and the following allotment. In principle, allocations were made all over the country in a single year, but 800 was the last year that this could be done. Thereafter the year of an allocation varied from province to province. Between 800 and 883 only three allocations were recorded for the Kinai area, where proprietary rights had become especially complex. Between 800 and the beginning of the tenth century, apparently no more than five or six allocations were made in areas outside of the Kinai.

Vagrants

According to the codes, every commoner had to be recorded in some household register. Further, his place of registration and residence was fixed. If a farmer became separated from his land, he would be identified as a vagrant (*furōnin*), an individual who had decided to move from his registered place of residence. He had thus placed himself outside, and in conflict with, the *ritsuryō* system.[46]

Law required the immediate return of all vagrants to their original places of registration. When an individual left his land, other members of his household were responsible for finding him. If after six years he still had not been located, his name was removed from the tax and household registers. Whenever an entire household became vagrant, members of the other four households in a five-household unit (*goho*) and the vagrants' relatives (as distant as first cousins) who lived in the same village were obligated to search for the missing persons. If not found within six years, their names would be removed from the census record.

Vagrancy emerged early in the *ritsuryō* period, as can be deduced from early government requests that various provincial governors have vagrants returned to their places of registry as soon as they were located. The famines and epidemics of the first decade of the eighth century, as well as the cost of building the Nara capital in the 710s, must have greatly increased the number of vagrants, thereby decreasing the number of registered farmers who paid taxes to the state. The demand for laborers to work on reclamation projects was a further inducement for farmers to leave their land and to seek employment elsewhere, increasing the number of vagrants and accelerating the deterioration of the *ritsuryō* system.

46 This view is expressed in Naoki Kōjirō, *Nara jidai shi no sho mondai* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1968), pp. 11–35. See Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land*, pp. 112–31.

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As early as 715 the state moved to resolve the problem by issuing what is known as the "*dodan* law."[47] Because the meaning of the word *dodan* is not clear, scholars have reached no consensus on its nature and results. According to the most recent interpretation, any person who abandoned his land for a period of more than three months was responsible for taxes at both his former and present places of residence.[48] By collecting taxes at both places, officials were attempting to encourage vagrants to return home, an interpretation that seems to have more merit than previous ones have.

A new policy toward vagrancy lay behind the 721 law that stated that when a runaway was found, provincial and district officials were to escort him home in relays if the original residence was known and if the vagrant was willing to return.[49] If the original place of residence was not known, the vagrant's name was entered in the household register of the area to which he had fled. The intent of earlier laws was thus undermined, as a vagrant was not permitted to register at his new location. Yet the revision did not completely eliminate state control over persons. Like the 723 statute for the development of rice land, it was intended only to defuse a problem that was becoming increasingly serious.

Examination of an edict issued in 736 reveals a more fundamental change in the government's vagrancy policy.[50] The first section required that a runaway who wished to return to his original place of registration be given a certificate that contained a statement of his intention to return. An enforced return in the company of local officials was not specified. Section 2 stated that a vagrant who desired to stay at his new address must be allowed to do so if he placed his name on a special roster (*meibo*) that subjected him to corvée and tax levies. The latter section reveals the desire of the authorities to deal with vagrants who did not wish to return to their original places of registration and residence and for whom registration was not clear.

Section 1 did not guarantee government control over vagrancy. Because enforced returns according to the 721 law were no longer re-

47 *Shoku Nihongi*, Reiki 1 (715) 5/1, KT 1.58–59. A variant text is found in *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, Council of State order, Kōnin 2 (811) 8/11, KT 25.519–20.

48 Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, vol. 4 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: shōgakkan, 1974), pp. 286–7; Yoshida Takashi, "Ritsuryō-sei to sonraku," in *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi*, 3.185.

49 *Ruijū sandai kyaku* edict, Tempyō 8 (736) 2/25, cites the regulation issued on Yōrō 5 (721) 4/27, KT 25.385.

50 *Ruijū sandai kyaku* edict, Tempyō 8 (736) 2/25, KT 25.385. A variant interpretation of this document can be found in Kamada Motokazu, "Ritsuryō kokka no futō taisaku," in Kyōto daigaku bungakubu, ed., *Akamatsu Toshihide kyōju taikan kinen kokushi ronshū* (Kyoto: Faculty of Letters of Kyoto University, 1972), pp. 173–88.

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quired, it became possible for a certificate-bearing vagrant to use the excuse that he had changed his mind and would not be returning home. He might then flee to still another place and once again become a vagrant. Surely this section of the new edict contributed little to the resolution of the vagrancy problem.

Section 2, on the other hand, was a more basic change. It made it possible for a vagrant to stay on where he was and to gain state recognition of his vagrant status if he paid taxes. The official title of the "roster" in the 736 law is unclear, but it was probably similar to "vagrant roster" (*furōchō*), a word appearing in ninth-century documents. Of course, a vagrant who was not listed on a household register received no personal-share land. However, being listed on a "special roster" made him responsible for paying taxes. In one sense, then, the new law maintained government control, but in another sense, it diminished that control. The 736 law was thus a compromise not unlike the 743 compromise on land control. The state's hold over people and land was not completely eliminated, but a significant turn in that direction was made.[51]

Efforts to place vagrants back under governmental control were not abandoned after 736, and historical sources reveal cases of vagrants returning home in accordance with the requirements of the 721 law. It is clear, however, that these efforts did not diminish the seriousness of the 736 compromise, for vagrants and household farmers were henceforth treated differently. Toward the end of the eighth century, the policy of offering status to vagrants and forcing them to pay taxes was further strengthened. After 797, when the establishment of the "vagrant roster" was ordered, the policy change became firmly rooted, an important development in the disintegration of state control over agricultural producers.

Loans

During the Nara period a class of rich farmers emerged in agricultural villages throughout Japan. Their great wealth came in part from loans made at high rates of interest. An order of 751 states that because rich farmers were lending rice and money to poor farmers at high interest and were taking their fields and houses as security, many personal-

51 A wooden tablet (*mokkan*) dated 753 and excavated from the ruins of a fort at Akita shows that produce taxes were being collected from vagrants. Farris believes that the 735–7 smallpox epidemic had an important bearing on the government's decision to abandon the forced escort of returning vagrants; see *Population, Disease, and Land*, pp. 121–35.

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share farmers were being forced to abandon their fields and flee to neighboring provinces.[52] Although the wording of the order prohibiting such practices probably exaggerated the situation somewhat, it does suggest that the problem was becoming quite serious.

Poor farmers included not only those who had failed to pay back their loans and had lost their land but also vagrants who poured across provincial borders to become privately employed laborers. At first, these vagrants were not reported to governmental authorities by their employers. The 736 policy of registering vagrants made it legal for wealthy farmers to employ them. The resultant increase in the number of vagrants widened the gap between rich and poor farmers, a problem intertwined with the rapid increase in the number and size of loans.

Although some wealthy farmers were undoubtedly new to the game, a majority were probably descendants of local gentry. A typical magnate may have been Ōya no Miyade, the district supervisor (*tairyō*) of Miki District in Sanuki Province, who owned livestock, slaves, rice, cash, rice paddies, and dry fields.[53] Most of his slaves were probably of the traditional type, but some were certainly vagrants. Ōya's rice holdings and money were clearly not obtained from agricultural activity alone but were accumulated, in part at least, from loans of rice and money at exorbitant rates of interest. Even his landholdings had undoubtedly been increased by loan foreclosures.

Loans made by wealthy farmers in local villages were only a part of a larger financial picture. State loans made by provincial officials were also a major source of revenue. As the financial situation of the *ritsuryō* state deteriorated, such income became increasingly important. Unlike the land tax that might be reduced or even waived at times of poor crops caused by drought or flood, a state loan was canceled only when a peasant borrower died, making interest on loans a relatively stable source of revenue. Thus as the government's financial needs increased, the state loans became larger and more numerous.

The greater importance of state loans was paralleled by the government's pressure on farmers to borrow. Although the original purpose of state loans (to help poor farmers in times of need) had not been forgotten, state loans took on the character of taxes to the extent that peasants borrowed more than they needed. The number of rice loans gradually increased after about 724, and the income from them was probably enough to cover the operating costs of some provincial gov-

52 *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 2 (783) 12/6, cites a council order of Tempyō Shōhō 3 (751) 9/4, KT, 1.257–9. A full text of the order is in *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, KT 25.403–4.

53 *Nihon ryōiki*, NKBT 70.393–5, trans. in Nakamura, *Miraculous Tales*, pp. 257–9.

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ernments. As a result of increasing their income from loans, various provinces were able to store up a considerable amount of rice paid as land tax (*denso*). Provincial governors were required to make yearly reports on these receipts and on their use. Twenty-five such reports (*shōzeichō*) for the decade between 729 and 739 have been preserved in the Shōsō-in in Nara.[54] Of course this is only a small percentage of the total submitted by various provinces during the eighth century, and only fragments of the twenty-five extant ones remain. Nevertheless, these fragments help explain the nature and volume of rice receipts and expenditures at a time when state loans were becoming an important source of revenue. According to rice storage reports from Owari Province dating between 730 and 734, this province's assets in unhulled rice rose from 162,808 *koku* in 722, to 213,324 *koku* in 730, and to 258,440 *koku* in 733.[55] During the eight years between 722 and 730 the rice revenue of Owari rose by 31 percent (an average increase of 3.43 percent per year) and between 730 and 733 by 21 percent, or 6.5 percent per year.

A report in 739 from the Bitchū Province reveals that both the principal and interest on 127 loans were canceled that year because forty-four borrowers had died.[56] The cancellations totaled 6,479.7 sheaves (*soku*). Although the average was 51 sheaves per loan, the size of the forty-four loans varied greatly. Most of the twenty-five smallest ones were less than 20 sheaves each. At the higher range, however, the loans were 142, 150, 172, 174, 184, and 191 sheaves. Such large loans could not possibly have been paid off in a single year, suggesting that cancellations were made for persons who had defaulted on their loans for several years. This leaves the impression that people were being forced to borrow and that interest on loans had acquired the character of tax revenue.

In 737 the government prohibited private lending.[57] We do not know to what extent this prohibition was enforced, but it is assumed that it forced some farmers to turn from private to state loans in years when these loans were becoming a vital source of state revenue. In the tenth month of 745 the government also set limits on two kinds of state loans: the *rontei-tō* and the *kuge-tō*. The former were limited to an amount fixed by the central government and were made by provincial

54 For a list of *shōzeichō* fragments, see Hayakawa Shōhachi, "Kuge-tō seido no seiritsu," *Shigaku zasshi* 69 (March 1960): 43–45; and Hayashi Rokurō and Suzuki Yasutami, eds., *Fukugen Tempyō shokoku shōzeichō* (Tokyo: Gendai shichōsha, 1985).

55 *Dai Nihon komonjo*, 1.413–17, 607–20. The *Nara ibun* contains a *shōzeichō* dated 734, 1.215–21.

56 *Dai Nihon komonjo*, 2.247–52; *Nara ibun*, 1.316–19.

57 *Shoku Nihongi* Tempyō 9 (737) 9/22, KT 1.146.

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authorities to farmers. These apparently provided an income proportionate to that particular province's operating costs. But the actual figures for the various provinces are not known. The *kuge-tō* loans, on the other hand, seem to have been those that a province was permitted to make in order to meet extraordinary costs. It is thought that income from these could be used to make up for defaults on *rontei-tō* loans, as well as for covering other unforeseen losses of public revenue. The remaining income from such loans was shared by provincial officials as personal income. The loans ranged from 100,000 sheaves for small provinces to 400,000 for larger ones. Ninth-century evidence suggests that the amount of *kuge-tō* loans made by a particular province was about equal to that of its *rontei-tō* loans.

Income from all state loans continued to increase until the early 730s, but then it declined because the provinces (1) were suffering a loss of revenue owing to an increasingly large number of loan cancellations after the smallpox epidemic in 735–7 and (2) had the heavy expense of building provincial temples (*kokubun-ji*). It had not been the sole responsibility of the provincial governors to cover these losses and expenses. The central government nevertheless established an arrangement by which provincial governors could obtain income from interest on two kinds of loans (the *rontei-tō* and the *kuge-tō*), thereby enabling them to cover deficits and increase their income. This system can be thought of as establishing and strengthening a new tax based on contractual arrangements that took advantage of both rice stored in provincial storehouses and a provincial governor's needs.

Because state loans were now taking the form of taxes, it was logical that the state should establish standards for deciding how much could be lent to a particular borrower. We do not have enough evidence to know precisely what this standard was, but the decision was probably made in terms of the borrower's holdings of arable land.

When considering the conditions that contributed to the process by which state loans took on the character of taxes, we should note that the old system of collecting taxes in kind was gradually becoming unacceptable as a way for the *ritsuryō* state to finance itself. Officials tended now to buy needed items in the market and to rely on income from loans for covering the cost of these purchases. Collecting taxes in kind gradually became an outdated way of generating revenue. The following conditions contributed to the shift:

1. A gradual improvement of exchange mechanisms (especially money and markets) that contributed to a greater volume of trade.

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2. More labor specialization that made it easier for the government to buy what was needed at a nearby market than to wait for tax payments in kind.
3. Greater peasant resistance to the burden of transporting goods to the capital.
4. An increase in the number of vagrants, complicating the collection of traditional forms of revenue.

Because of these factors, Japan's tax-in-kind system eventually became inoperative; state rice (*shōzei*) in provincial storehouses became an important element in the government's revenue structure; and state loans took on the form of a land tax.

Later on, the character of the *kuge-tō* changed. Instead of the income from these loans being used to supplement rice revenue, it was used mainly to pay the stipends of provincial officers. That is, the making of *kuge-tō* loans became a gubernatorial prerogative that contributed indirectly, a century or so later, to the weakening of the provincial administrative system.

THE EARLY *SHŌEN*

The land law of 711 allowed aristocrats and local gentry to request permission, through a provincial governor, to cultivate a piece of virgin land at their own personal expense (*shikō*). In 723 when the government ruled that newly developed land could be passed on to the developer's descendants to the third generation, and again in 743 when it was ruled that such land could be passed on to his descendants in perpetuity, the basic condition was that the cost of development should be borne by the developer. When opening land for cultivation of rice, it was necessary for the developer to obtain in advance an area of virgin land that could be irrigated. The establishment of the private possession of rice land, before 743, therefore came in three distinct stages: (1) gaining possession of virgin land that could be irrigated, (2) developing the land at one's own expense, and (3) obtaining the right to pass on the "private holding" to his descendants. After 743, privately possessed land could also be obtained by donation or purchase and could be sold. Moreover, when land was earmarked by the government as land that could be developed, it, too, could be obtained by donation or purchase and could be sold. Thus private possession was of three forms: newly cultivated rice land, virgin land earmarked for development, and land obtained by donation or purchase. These devel-

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opments, together with the emergence of a new type of agricultural management, produced what is referred to here as the "early *shōen* (manor)."[58]

The Kuwabara-shō

We have a fair number of historical documents that provide reliable information about the formation and early development of the Kuwabara-shō, a *shōen* (manor), located in the province of Echizen and belonging to the great Tōdai-ji of Nara. From these documents we have learned that Kuwabara-shō had come into existence by 754, when the central government's Tōdai-ji Construction Office spent 180 strings of copper coins (1,000 to a string) to buy the following items from Ōtomo no Maro of Sakai District in Echizen Province: more than eighty-seven *chō* of virgin land, nine *chō* of cultivated land, three buildings, six tools, and thirteen wooden sluices. Because roughly 10 percent of the land purchased had already been converted to rice land, it is deduced that Ōtomo no Maro was a wealthy Echizen farmer who had been engaged in converting virgin land to rice fields and that the Kuwabara-shō contained, from the start, some land that had already been cultivated.

Extant documents also reveal that a certain Ikue no Azumabito played a key role in arranging and financing the sale. He was a wealthy member of the local gentry who had been an official in the Tōdai-ji Construction Office in the capital. And as the highest-ranking official in the neighboring district of Asuwa, he was – according to reports sent by him and others to the Tōdai-ji Construction Office between 754 and 757[59] – engaged in managing the new estate or proprietorship (*shōen*). So it is not surprising to find that after exercising his influence both in Echizen and at the capital, Azumabito was selected to administer the Kuwabara-shō.

Reports sent to Nara also indicate that Azumabito was himself an investor in the project. In 754 and 755 (the first two years of reclamation work) his total investment was 7,838 sheaves, and his reported income during the first two years was less than his initial investment.

58 See Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land*, pp. 84–91. Although the word *shōen* is used here, when a particular *shōen* was named, only the first character *shō* was placed after the name, as in Kuwabara-*shō*. Originally *shō* referred to a house or storehouse, and it only gradually came to designate a piece of land. Eventually the term was used for the lands, offices, and granaries that made up an agricultural enterprise known as a *shōen*.

59 These reports can be found in *Dai Nihon komonjo*, 4.52–58, 111–15, 219–21, 246–50, and in *Nara ibun*, 2.696–7.

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But during the fourth year, receipts exceeded expenditures. So within four years, the new *shōen* seems to have become a profitable enterprise for the Tōdai-ji.

At a time when all people and land of the country had been placed, in theory at least, under governmental control by arrangements referred to as the *ritsuryō* system, one wonders how the developers managed to obtain the labor needed for such increasingly numerous and large reclamation projects. The available evidence suggests that the laborers were not slaves but farmers who worked for wages paid in cash – farmers who were either personal-share landholders whose rice fields were located nearby (and were taking on additional work to increase their income) or were vagrants who had abandoned their share holdings elsewhere and had fled to this part of Echizen. It was undoubtedly through the efforts of such influential individuals as Asumabito that enough farmers were found and paid to do work of turning the virgin land of a *shōen* into productive rice fields.

A study of the Kuwabara-shō indicates that the owners of *shōen* had to lean heavily on members of the local gentry for development and administration. But members of the local gentry also needed the support of aristocrats at the court and/or large temples, as they had to obtain permission to take over a piece of virgin land. Development without approval could lead to confiscation. And if provincial governors saw that newly opened fields had a high yield, they would be greatly tempted to seize them on some pretext and distribute them as personal-share land. So the local gentry had to have the backing of court aristocrats to enclose communal land, to secure land already developed, and to prevent its confiscation. Thus *shōen* were established and developed through the joint endeavors of court aristocrats (or temples) and members of the local gentry.

As already noted, slaves were not relied on for either developing or running a *shōen;* such work was done instead by employed labor. These agricultural laborers were apparently not independent personal-share holders. Rather than thinking of the laborers employed for developing a *shōen* as persons who received wages over and beyond what they paid out for taxes and land rent, it is probably more accurate to think of lump sums being paid to the local gentry for getting such work done. Personal-share holders were usually in debt to wealthy gentry and so could not refuse to join a labor force that was being mobilized for land development. We know that in 757, a Kuwabara-shō official named Sone no Otomaro paid the land rent (*jishitō*) of a

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farmer who had abandoned his land.[60] In such a case the government was unable to collect its share of the yield on that piece of land. So it is assumed that the farmer had already been in debt to Otomaro.

Characteristics of the early shōen

Although the Nara period rise of *shōen* reveals significant features of the later development, we have come to see that the early *shōen* were fundamentally different. When comparing these privately owned early *shōen* (such as the one at Kuwabara) with their Heian and medieval counterparts, we find that the latter had three characteristics that were not prominent in Nara times.

One well-known feature of post-1000 *shōen* was the right of their possessors and managers not to be taxed (*fuyu-ken*) or policed (*fu'nyū-ken*) by the state. They were therefore freed of two burdens inflicted on them by a state attempting to maintain and extend its control: assessing and collecting taxes for defraying the cost of government, and enforcing penal and administrative law. Not just the land of *shōen* but also the persons who made a living from them were removed from both types of control. Thus the sharp increase in the number and size of Heian *shōen*, especially those belonging to huge institutions, became identified with and contributed to the social, economic, and political instability prevalent in Japan during the last years of the Heian period. But such rights had not yet emerged during the previous Nara period and were therefore not characteristic features of the early *shōen*.

A second feature of Heian *shōen* was the linkage of their spread with a progressive deterioration of the *ritsuryō* order. But the early *shōen* were not yet strong and the *ritsuryō* system still flourished. In those days a *shōen* was usually established with the assistance and cooperation of state officials. Some scholars have concluded that Nara period officials at all levels actually received revenue from, and exercised control over, both the land and the people of these proprietorships, suggesting that the early *shōen* were even supporting the *ritsuryō* order.

A third feature of Heian *shōen* was a tendency to expand and become increasingly independent of outside control. The early *shōen*, on the other hand, were not marked by spectacular growth; indeed, many reverted to wasteland and disappeared within a short time. For example, all early Tōdai-ji *shōen* in Echizen Province, including the one at

60 See *Dai Nihon komonjo*, 4.246–50; *Nara ibun*, 2.696–7; *Tōnan'in monjo* 2.149–53.

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Kuwabara, had disappeared by the end of the tenth century, probably having only nominal existence at the beginning of that century. The main reason for their disappearance may have been the difficulty of obtaining an adequate and continuing supply of agricultural workers, who could be obtained only with the cooperation of the local gentry. Thus the early *shōen*, like the *ritsuryō* order within which they had developed, were in a state of decline during the ninth century.

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CHAPTER 9

ASUKA AND NARA CULTURE: LITERACY, LITERATURE, AND MUSIC

This chapter deals with the literature and music of Japan during the two centuries between the acceptance of Buddhism in 587 and the abandonment of the Nara capital in 784. These were years of vast and fundamental change in the island kingdom, of cultural forced feeding and vigorous new growth. In particular, they were the years when Japan became fully and for all time a participant in the high civilization of East Asia. Participation meant religious and philosophical orientations, an ideal of imperial rule, legal and administrative structures, techniques and styles of architecture, city planning, sculpture, painting, and music – all derived directly or indirectly from China and shared in one degree or another by the peoples on its periphery. Above all, it meant literacy: the mastery of the Chinese language and the eventual adaptation of its script to the writing of Japanese. From literacy came ventures in historiography – at once a definition and a redefinition of the Japanese state – and in poetry. Emulation of China led the newly literate Japanese to compose verses in Chinese modeled on the ones they found in Chinese anthologies, and it also led them to write down their own songs and to turn the native prosody into high poetic art. The myths, legends, folk and hero tales of the oral tradition were also written down in the first histories and local gazetteers, to form the beginnings of a prose literature.

LITERACY AND LITERATURE

No one knows when Chinese writing first reached the Japanese islands, but the arrival of the scholar Wani from the Korean kingdom of Paekche in the late fourth or early fifth century is a convenient event from which to date the beginning of literacy.[1] Wani, who arrived in the

The translations of the poems in this chapter are from the author's forthcoming book entitled *The Gem-Glistening Cup*, volume 1 of *A Waka Anthology*, to be published by Stanford University Press. They appear here by permission.

1 *Nihon shoki*, Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol 67, pp. 371–2.

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sixteenth year of Ōjin, was appointed tutor of the crown prince, supplementing or supplanting another man from Paekche, Achiki or Achikishi, who had accompanied a gift of a stallion and a mare from the king of Paekche in the preceding years. Achiki recommended Wani as a superior scholar, and the Japanese court promptly asked Paekche to send him. Wani is said to have arrived with eleven volumes of Chinese writings, including the *Analects* and the *Thousand-Character Classic.*[2] He stayed on and became the ancestor of a specialized occupational group (*be*) of scribes, the *fumi no obito.*[3] Dependence on the services of such a group suggests that literacy did not initially spread far at the Japanese court; that is, the employment of Chinese or Korean secretaries would have been an obvious answer to whatever needs for communication in writing with the continent were felt by early Japanese monarchs. Rather, it seems likely that literacy remained at an extremely marginal level during the fifth and sixth centuries, and mostly in the hands of immigrants and their descendants. The earliest writings thought to have been produced in Japan are inscriptions on artifacts such as swords and mirrors. The longest such inscription, a Chinese text of 115 characters inlaid in gold, was discovered in 1978 under the rust of an iron sword excavated ten years earlier from the Inari-yama tumulus in Saitama Prefecture. Its alleged "Koreanisms" again point to the use of writing being in the hands of continentals, especially those from the Korean peninsula. Majority opinion assigns this sword text to a cyclical date corresponding to 471.[4]

Probably the Japanese people's real impulse for acquiring literacy came in the sixth century, with the introduction of Buddhism and the almost contemporaneous reunification of China under the Sui dynasty. These events – the establishment of a unified politically and culturally magnetic center on the mainland, and the extension to Japanese shores of the missionary religion then prevailing there – brought Japan into a radically different orientation toward the continent. The groundwork had been laid since the fourth century by extensive immigration from Korea, the immigrants including resident Chinese or sinified scholars

2 The anachronism has been pointed out in its references to the sixth-century *Thousand Character Classic.* Kojima Noriyuki speculates that the account on which the *Nihon shoki* narrative was based was altered to include mention of this text, considered basic to elementary training in reading Chinese. See Kojima Noriyuki, *Jōdai Nihon bungaku to Chūgoku bungaku* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1971), vol. 1, p. 82.

3 *Obito,* basically meaning "chief," was one of the clan titles (*kabane*) of ancient Japan. This group of scribes was centered in Kawachi on the coast and was referred to as the "western scribes," as distinguished from the "eastern scribes" in inland Yamato.

4 See Murayama Shichiro and Roy Andrew Miller, "The Inariyama Tumulus Sword Inscription," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 5 (1979): 412.

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such as Wani, as well as a broad spectrum of artisans and other specialists. These people contributed materially to the evolution of insular culture; indeed, they may have altered it substantially. But the impact of continental immigration during the fourth and fifth centuries had more to do with horses and armor than with books and writing. This influx was ultimately a result of migrations in northeast Asia following the fall of the Han dynasty in the third century, and it brought about in the Japanese islands new instrumentalities of rule, perhaps by the incursion of a new ruling group, the much-discussed horse riders from beyond the Yalu River.[5] However that may have been, by the late sixth century the rulers of the Yamato state faced a greatly altered situation on the continent. The centuries-old division of China was wiped away in 589 by the Sui, a dynasty replaced by the more enduring T'ang in 618. In the seventh century the Korean peninsula was unified for the first time by Silla, the rival kingdoms of Paekche and Koguryŏ falling in 663 and 668, respectively. Politically resurgent East Asia made the Japanese rulers keenly conscious of the vulnerability of their island kingdom. One reaction was to establish a defense headquarters at Dazai-fu in northern Kyushu to guard against incursions from the newly expansive Korean and Chinese states.[6] But a far more significant and far-reaching move was the opening of formal relations with the Sui in 607 and the T'ang in 630, and the accompanying importation of elements of high Chinese civilization. For the first time in history, but not for the last, Japan faced a foreign threat by consciously opening itself to change from abroad, to the very techniques and ideologies viewed as advantages of the foreign power.

Two of the foreign advantages that the Japanese perceived were literacy and the Buddhist religion. The latter was introduced from Paekche in 552 (or perhaps 538) and, after overcoming brief but violent opposition from native conservative forces, was accepted by the Japanese court in 587.[7] The Yamato state and each of the clans (*uji*)

5 Gari Ledyard summarizes the horse rider theory of Egami Namio and reargues the case for a fourth-century invasion of Japan, in his "Galloping Along with the Horseriders: Looking for the Founders of Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1 (1974): 217–54.

6 The area was regarded as crucial from the fourth century on, and various earlier defense establishments predated the foundation of Dazai fu at its present location in 663. The dispatch of conscript "guardians of the capes" (*sakimori*) is memorialized in a large number of *Man'yōshū* poems.

7 The *Nihon shoki* mentions the gift of a gilt-bronze statue of Śākyamuni, banners, and sutras from the king of Paekche to the Yamato court in the tenth month of the year corresponding to 552; see NKBT, 68.100–1. Current scholarship seems to favor 538 as the year in which Buddhism reached Japan. The issue is discussed in Ienaga Saburō, ed., *Nihon Bukkyōshi* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 47–8. In accordance with the hypothesis explicated by Ienaga, King Kimmei's reign should be adjusted to date from 531, and the gift of the Buddhist

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over which it reigned were cult-centered entities that traced their descent from ancestral nature deities, whose protection was believed to be essential to their survival and well-being. Guarantor and protector of the state was thus a ready-made role for the new faith, and the Japanese energetically set about erecting temples with such purposes in mind, an activity that culminated in the dedication of the mighty Tōdai-ji with its gigantic gilt-bronze Vairocana in 752. With the advent of Buddhism, Japan was no longer a barbaric outland, but a part of the spiritual world of East Asia, a sharer of belief, liturgy, iconography, and language. An unbreakable link had been forged to the continent and at a level that was bound to exert a strong influence on the subsequent course of Japanese civilization. Language is particularly relevant to this discussion, for Chinese had become, and remained, the scriptural language of East Asian Buddhism. The need to read and understand the sutras and other scriptural writings was a constant urge toward the reformation of the Japanese elite into a literate class. Japan's ties with China were strengthened by devout pilgrims and students who went to learn at the holy places of the Middle Kingdom. India, the birthplace of the faith, was too remote, and so China became for Japanese Buddhists the object of their ardent and arduous quest for enlightenment.

Confucianism was probably an influence in Japan before Buddhism, however. Its introduction was gradual, not a conversion experience, as Buddhism was to a degree. Confucianism formed the framework by means of which one state in East Asia could understand and address another, providing the vocabulary of social and international hierarchy. As we noted earlier, the scholar Wani from Paekche brought the *Analects,* the basic Confucian text, in the sixteenth year of Ōjin, that is, around the beginning of the fifth century. Throughout the sixth century Japan received from Paekche, its closest source of continental civilization, the dispatch under a rotation system of a series of "doctors of the Five Classics," as well as other learned specialists in medicine, divination, and calendrical science.[8] Paekche, also the source of Japan's first contact with Buddhism, was a hard-pressed ally in the wars of the Korean peninsula, and so it was anxious to commend itself to the rulers of Yamato in its struggle with the expansive state of Silla.

icon and sutra from Paekche, to the year earth-senior/horse, corresponding to 538. If the year at issue was the seventh of Kimmei's reign, as specified by *Gangōji garan engi narabi ni ruki shizaichō,* however, the revised accession date would have to be 532.

8 Kojima points out that the Doctors of the Five Classics came to Japan from Paekche during the same period when Paekche was receiving similar visiting scholars from the kingdom of Liang in South China. See Kojima, *Jōdai Nihon bungaku to Chūgoku bungaku,* vol. 1, p. 85.

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Ultimately, in the seventh century, Silla overcame its rivals, both Paekche in the west and Koguryŏ in the north, having driven the Japanese from their own Korean toehold in Mimana (Kaya) a century earlier in 562. But by the middle of the seventh century, Japan had already established direct relations with China and was fully embarked on its adventure in recasting itself as the newest of the sinified states of east Asia.

A rough division may be made in this period between the seventh and eighth centuries, a distinction implied in the title of this chapter. The foundation of a capital at Nara in 710 brought an experience of urban life hitherto unknown on such a scale in Japan. The eighth century marked the height of the early flourishing of Buddhist institutions and sinitic culture in general. Trends that had been gaining momentum for some centuries reached their first period of full fruition. Politically, the seventh century was more tentative, though not less creative culturally. During most of this century the court moved from one site to another within the Asuka area, a region of fields and hills several miles south of Nara. In the sense intended in this chapter, "Asuka–Nara" is roughly equivalent to "seventh–eighth century."

The earliest writing in Japan was undoubtedly in the Chinese language, with the fifth-century sword inscriptions as examples, ones that already show the use of Chinese script to spell out Japanese names. Increasing mastery of *kambun* (Chinese prose) and the recurrent necessity of representing Japanese words are the dual factors that led to the peculiar evolution of literary culture in Japan. The training in Chinese classics that began with Wani in the early fifth century must have been cumulative, though greatly accelerated owing to the political and cultural ramifications of seventh-century contacts with the Asian continent. When Prince Shōtoku (574–622) produced his so-called Seventeen Injunctions (preserved in the *Nihon shoki*) in 604, he composed the text in *kambun* as a matter of course and displayed familiarity with fifteen different Chinese literary, historical, and philosophical works.[9] As Japan's earliest scholar-statesman and the most important patron of Buddhism of his day, Shōtoku represents the new directions in which he wished to lead his country. Japan was to be a land of Buddhist faith and Chinese learning, one whose polity was to embody the centralized imperial authority then newly renascent on the continent. This

9 *Shih ching, Shu ching, Hsiao ching, Lun yü, Tso chuan, Li chi, Kuan tzu, Meng tzu, Mo tzu, Lao tzu, Chuang tzu, Han fei tzu, Shih chi, Han shu,* and *Wen hsüan,* according to Hayashi Mikiya, "Chūgoku shisō," in *Asuka jidai,* vol. 2 of *Zusetsu Nihon bunkashi taikei* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1965), p. 165.

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learned reformer seems to face forward into a new era enlightened by temples, books, and virtuous rule. And yet Prince Shōtoku was also interested in the past. Indeed, it was inevitable that he would be, for among the Chinese writings he studied were histories such as the *Shih chi* (Records of the historian) and the *Han shu* (Dynastic history of the Han). In 620, according to the *Nihon shoki,* Shōtoku together with Shima no Ōomi (Soga no Umako) compiled the first Japanese history of which we have record.[10] This set of writings treated both the imperial line and the subsidiary governing and occupational groups. It is thought that this history was lost, partly in the fire that destroyed the Soga mansions in the coup d'état of 645 and partly as a result of the disturbances of the Jinshin war of 672. In the 680s Emperor Temmu (d. 686) ordered the work to begin again, instigating dual historiographical projects that finally bore fruit in the earliest extant Japanese histories, the *Kojiki* (712) and the *Nihon shoki* (720).

It seems strange that the oldest Japanese books are thus two histories that were completed almost simultaneously, both under official sponsorship. Both are intended to tell the entire history of the race, indeed of the cosmos as well as of the nation as such, beginning like the Old Testament at the beginning of things, the rising of form out of chaos. Both are accounts of mythology in their earlier ranges and gradually work forward toward veritable history. But only the *Nihon shoki* truly takes on the character of a sober Chinese chronicle before breaking off with the abdication of the Empress Jitō in 697. One can see that it is a compromise between the compilers' urge to provide Japan with a counterpart of a Chinese dynastic history, or of certain aspects of the *Shih chi,* and the felt need to tell their own story of the world, which was a story of their gods as well as of themselves. The *Kojiki* is something else again, also a compromise but of a different sort. Here the proportion of myth, legend, folktale, poetry, and anecdote to the whole is overwhelmingly great. Chinese influence is by no means lacking, but it is slight compared with that in the *Nihon shoki.* The *Kojiki* is also much shorter – only three volumes as compared with thirty – and ends with the death of Empress Suiko in 628. That is, the bare chronology ends at that point; the anecdotal account goes no further than the reign of King Kenzō, who died in 487.

From the historiographical point of view, the *Kojiki* is a fairly primitive account of ancient history and myth, whereas the *Nihon shoki* is intended to be a history of modern as well as ancient times, the prod-

10 Suiko 28 (620) 8, NKBT, 68.203.

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uct of thorough and up-to-date research. Except for the poems with which its text is enlivened, the *Nihon shoki* is written in literary Chinese, by far the longest document to be composed in Japan in that (or any other) language up until the time of its appearance. The *Kojiki* is different here again, being even in its prose text an unstable amalgam of Chinese and Japanese syntax, all represented in Chinese characters, to be sure, but with a unique hybrid quality. Clauses in literary Chinese and others in phonetically represented Japanese appear in the same sentence. This is the essence of its compromise: a linguistic one.

The *Kojiki* was an experiment, an odd and fascinating one never repeated in quite the same way, though its tension between the Chinese and Japanese languages remained a formative dynamic in the evolution of writing styles in Japan. It has been suggested that the motivation for its compilation was essentially an internal matter – an attempt to straighten out for the Japanese themselves the tangled and conflicting claims to divine or other prestigious ancestry of the various noble clans – whereas the *Nihon shoki* was intended to be an "official" history to show to foreigners (hence written in respectable Chinese) and to point to with pride.[11]

Writing and learning in the form of the Chinese classics had thus been introduced to Japan by the beginning of the fifth century. Sword inscriptions in Chinese showing alleged Korean usages have been unearthed from the same century. In the sixth century the Japanese court set up a system of visiting professors in various aspects of Chinese learning, supplied by the Korean state of Paekche. At the same time, Paekche introduced its insular neighbor to Buddhism, and Buddhism in turn brought in more writings to be studied in the form of its sacred scriptures. Official interest in historiography, the compilation of codes, and the like shows up in the seventh century, especially on the parts of Prince Shōtoku and Emperor Temmu. It was probably also at this time that the transition from oral to written poetry began, but this was a process that was never completed, in the sense that the oral composition of poetry never ceased, even at the highest cultural level. But it was no doubt in the seventh century that poems, both new and old, began to be written down as a normal thing. This matter of writing down poetry had important implications for the evolution of literary culture in Japan and must concern us here. But first let us note that the composition of Chinese poetry (*kanshi*) in Japan, a sure signal

11 Donald L. Philippi, trans., "Introduction," *Kojiki* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), pp. 16–17.

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of advancing sophistication, also started in the late seventh century. The compilation of poetic anthologies, another activity that the Japanese learned from the Chinese, followed in the eighth century, resulting in two works that have come down to us, the *Kaifūsō* (751), the first anthology of *kanshi* by Japanese authors, and the *Man'yōshū* (after 759), the earliest extant anthology of Japanese verse. The historiographical activities commencing in the seventh century had meanwhile resulted in the *Kojiki* (712) and the *Nihon shoki* (720).

The Japanese were not among the handful of peoples that invented a writing system, so to speak, from scratch. Like most civilizations, they adapted a neighboring one. It was an accident of geography and history that the only one they encountered during the early centuries of their relations with the outside world should have been that of the Chinese. The results of this accident were as far-reaching and formative of their nascent culture as would have been the case if they had encountered Egyptian hieroglyphics and nothing else. They were inevitably drawn into the orbit of a self-contained and powerful civilization with a unique script that has always acted as an effective barrier between those who know and use it and those who do not. Like writing generally, the Chinese writing system had pictographic origins, but resisting the general trend, it neither became the relic of a dead civilization nor evolved completely into a phonetic system. It is in fact the only nonphonetic writing system remaining in use in the world today. From pictographic origins the so-called Chinese characters came to include a large repertory of "ideographs," signs denoting the abstract concepts of an advanced civilization. They also developed classes of structurally complex graphs, in which homophones are distinguished by a "radical system" of significs combined into one sign with a common phonetic element. The signific–phonetic structure of many characters shows that the system contains the seed of a purely phonetic way of writing, as the pronunciation of such characters is predictable to the experienced reader. As it turned out, it was the Japanese who realized this potential.

The most important peculiarity of the way in which writing evolved in China that made adaptation of the resulting system take the form it did in Japan was that each graph represented a word in the Chinese language. Chinese was made up of monosyllabic words, with a number of "tones" or voice contours helping distinguish the resultant large number of homophones. One graph thus represented one syllable, the pronunciation of which was more or less fixed within a given dialect. It was therefore possible to use the graphs in a way not intended by their

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inventors, that is, phonetically, using the pronunciation and disregarding the meaning (and the tone) in order to write words in another language. This process involved making a series of rough sound equivalences, as the phonetic quality of no two languages is identical. But it was a process that could and did work. It was, in fact, a process that the Chinese themselves had invented so as to transcribe the foreign words coming in with Buddhist scriptures from India by way of Central Asia from the third century onward. Some Sanskrit words the Chinese chose to translate, in the process expanding, refining, or otherwise altering the denotations of lexical items in their own language. In other cases they adopted the Sanskrit word or name as part of their Buddhist vocabulary and spelled it out, syllable by syllable, with characters used for their phonetic value. It was this system, already in use in the Buddhist writings they obtained from China, that the Japanese employed to transcribe words in their own language, which like Sanskrit was highly polysyllabic. And so a text like the *Nihon shoki* could be written in Chinese, with the names of Japanese people and places represented with characters used phonetically. To the Japanese this system would have posed little problem (once they had acquired the necessary skill in Chinese), as they could readily distinguish words in their own language when reading the resulting text, easily making their way back and forth between the basically semantic expository continuum and the individual phonetic items, though the whole would have been an undifferentiated series of Chinese characters to the untrained eye.

If the Japanese had been content to go on in this way, they could have remained literate in Chinese and never bothered to write their own language at all. The most obvious alternative was to write out not only individual Japanese words but also whole Japanese texts, in the character-by-character phonetic method. As the compiler of the *Kojiki* observed in his preface, the result would have reached inordinate lengths. He thus devised the compromise just described, in which the text oscillates between the two languages.[12] But this solution was inherently unsatisfactory, as the work produced was really neither Japanese nor Chinese. The phonetic method was, however, a reasonable answer to the other problem that was immediately presented to would-be Japanese historians, anthologists, and poets: how to record Japanese poetry. The numerous poems preserved in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*

12 The compiler, Ō no Yasumaro (d. 723), remarks in his Preface to the *Kojiki*, "To narrate everything in *kun* [i.e., semantically] would miss the sense, whereas to write it all down in *on* [i.e., phonetically] would drag out the content to even greater length. And so I have mixed *on* and *kun* in the same sentence." See *Kojiki*, NKBT, 1.48–9.

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are spelled out character by character, each graph used for its phonetic value, without an admixture of semantic usages. These ancient songs are thus preserved in exact phonetic notation, and it is plain that the compilers of the chronicles understood that a poem exists in its sound value and so must be represented unambiguously in its own language, whereas prose is a matter of conveying ideas and thus can be written with a greater degree of phonetic and syntactic ambiguity or even in a completely different language. Or so one would think. But the matter turns out to be much more complex than this, and the neat distinction proposed between the proper ways of writing prose and poetry was by no means uniformly observed in the largest collection of early Japanese verse, the *Man'yōshū* of the eighth century. Many of the over 4,500 poems in this anthology are in fact recorded in the way just described, and it is no doubt for this reason that the phonetic use of Chinese characters is referred to as *man'yōgana* (Man'yō borrowed names), with *kana* (borrowed names) being the Japanese term for the character-derived phonetic writing systems that were eventually developed. But many other poems in the *Man'yōshū* are not written in *man'yōgana,* at least not in their entirety. The text of the *Man'yōshū* in fact presents fascinating evidence of scribal preference for variety and complexity and even for deliberate obscurity over a simple and easily learned regularity. Complexity entered the system in a number of different ways. One of these was that the obvious solution of deciding on one character for each syllable of the Japanese phonetic system was deliberately avoided. Several characters with the same pronunciation were used for the same syllable. The syllable *shi,* for instance, was written with at least twenty-nine different graphs used for their Sino-Japanese (*on*) value. Another feature of the Man'yō writing system was the employment of whole phrases or clauses of Chinese syntax, in which the succession of characters would be perfectly readable as Chinese but in which a Japanese equivalent or "translation" was implied. To take a simple instance, the three graphs *ta wang chih* (in their modern Mandarin pronunciation) give the meaning "of the great king." The phrase is "read" by a quickly established convention as *ōkimi no,* meaning roughly the same thing in Japanese. These Japanese "readings" of characters are known as *kun.* A combination of *on* and *kun* readings of characters eventually came to typify Japanese prose orthography. It characterizes *Man'yōshū* orthography as well, but with an important difference. In the *Man'yōshū* (and the poetry in the early chronicles) all the *on* readings are "phonograms," that is, characters used for their phonetic value in the way just described, whereas in modern Japanese

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prose they are mostly Chinese loanwords, of which the language eventually adopted an enormous lexicon. Japanese poetry, however, remained free of loanwords from its beginning, except for a few Buddhist items in certain restricted types of poetry, and a range of extremely early importations not recognized as loans.[13]

A further refinement or complication of Man'yō orthography is the "borrowed *kun*." Not only were the Sino-Japanese pronunciations of the characters used for phonetic spelling, but once a *kun* reading had been established for a character, it too could be borrowed and used for phonetic purposes. For instance, the character *chen*, "shake," was "read" in Japanese as *furu*, a verb with the same meaning. The character could then be borrowed to write the place name Furu. Similarly, the two numeral characters for "five" and "ten" written in combination made not only *wu-shih*, the Chinese word for "fifty," but the Old Japanese word for the same number, namely, *i*. According to the principle of "borrowed *kun*," "fifty" could and did also represent the word *i*, "sleep," as well as the first syllable in the place name Irago. There are innumerable examples of this sort of thing in the *Man'yōshū*. *Kun*- and *on*-based *man'yōgana* were sometimes used in the spelling of the same word, and a single line of poetry might have semantic and phonetic components as well as "zero" elements, in which the grammar calls for a possessive particle (for instance), which is not represented orthographically but is simply supplied by the reader. There also are examples of Chinese word order, which are meant to be reversed and read as Japanese syntax. As if all this were not enough, there is the phenomenon of associative transference, in which, for example, the characters "flying bird" represent the place name Asuka, because Asuka had *tobu tori no* ("of the flying bird") as a fixed epithet. The ultimate in orthographic word games is provided by such a rebus as "on top of the mountain there is another mountain," represented by five characters that form the verb *ide*, "come out." The point of this visual pun is that the character for "come out" resembles two superimposed "mountain" characters. Graphomania of this order was not only a Japanese malady. In fact, the "two mountains" rebus derives directly from a much more complicated series of conundrums in a Chinese poem included in *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung*, a sixth-century anthology well known in Japan.[14]

13 Among these latter are probably the words for "horse" (*uma*, from Chinese *ma*) and "plum" (*ume*, from Chinese *mei*).

14 For the Japanese use of the rebus, see MYS 9:1787. The Chinese source is the first of "Four Old *Chüeh-chu* Poems" from chap. 10 of *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung*, a sixth-century Chinese anthology of love poetry. For a translation, see Anne Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 264.

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These special qualities of *Man'yōshū* orthography represent one of the cultural features of the age, an intoxication with the wonders of the new learning and an exploration of its various possibilities. A more sober approach to the mechanics of writing eventually led to an almost exclusive preference for the phonetic element of the methodological tangle that teased the brains of eight-century scribes. Regularization of phonogram spelling had culminated in *kana* syllabaries by the beginning of the tenth century. There resulted two of these syllabaries, *hiragana* (smooth *kana*) and *katakana* (square *kana*). The former developed from cursive abbreviations of whole characters, and the latter, from isolated graphic elements. *Hiragana* became the major vehicle for the new courtly literature of the tenth century and after, whereas *katakana* was more or less limited to providing glosses on Chinese texts. All of this later development is outside the scope of this chapter, but it is of interest to note that the tolerance for superfluous scriptal complexity so notable in the *Man'yōshū* never entirely disappeared. The *hiragana* system remained highly redundant until its simplification in modern times, using a variety of symbols for the same syllable. And even now, the Japanese writing system is probably the world's most complex, its mix of Chinese characters in various readings and the two *kana* systems making possible a playing back and forth between semantic and phonetic that is unusual if not unique. In discovering literacy, the Japanese created an enduring strand of their cultural fabric.

The oldest Japanese book to come down to us is the *Kojiki* (Record of ancient matters), compiled as a result of the historiographical initiatives already mentioned and presented to Empress Gemmei in 712. Its compiler was Ō no Yasumaro (d. 723), a scholar-official at Gemmei's court. In 711 Yasumaro was ordered to "record and present" a set of documents previously "learned" by Hieda no Are. Little is known of Hieda no Are, who was an attendant (*toneri*) of Emperor Temmu renowned for his apparently photographic memory. The documents were of two sorts, genealogical and anecdotal. The genealogical group, *Sumera mikoto no hitsugi* (Sun lineage of the sovereigns), traced the ancestry of the ruling house from its mythical origins to the reign of Empress Suiko, a sovereign who died in 628. The anecdotal documents, the *Saki no yo no furugoto* (Ancient accounts of former ages), leave off around 498, with the reign of King Kenzō. How to understand the respective functions of Are and Yasumaro in the compilation of the *Kojiki* is by no means clear, but it has been suggested that Are

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had preserved in his memory the relevant documents with their correct "readings" and that Yasumaro recorded these readings in the somewhat abbreviated amalgam of Chinese and Japanese that he defended as a compromise between the demands of clarity and concision.[15]

The *Kojiki* is made up of three books, or scrolls. The first book presents an officially approved version of the basic myths of the Japanese as they had been transmitted down to the seventh century. After an account of origins in which generations of deities come into existence spontaneously, there appear the creator gods Izanagi and Izanami. These are a male and female pair, and the myth describes how they marry and create the islands of Japan by means of sexual generation. A possibly significant detail is that the woman speaks first in the marriage ceremony, leading to the production of defective offspring and the necessity of repeating the rites in an order that gives the initiative to the male. A shift from matriarchal to patriarchal institutions may have found expression in this story. When Izanami gives birth to the fire deity, she is burned and dies. Izanagi mourns for her, "crawling around her head and around her feet" in a paroxysm of grief that seems to look forward to the laments of Hitomaro in the *Man'yōshū*. Izanagi searches for Izanami in the land of the dead, the dark realm of Yomi no Kuni; searching for the dead is also part of the ritual of grief described by Hitomaro. Izanami has already "eaten of the hearth of Yomi" and so cannot return to the land of the living. Against her wishes, Izanagi strikes fire to look at her, only to discover maggots swarming in a mass of putrefaction. This horrific scene is followed by a nightmarelike sequence in which the dead Izanami and the "hags of Yomi" chase Izanagi, who escapes and blocks with a boulder the entrance to Yomi. The primordial pair stand on opposite sides of the boulder and curse each other, thereby breaking their troth.

This climax to the second and most dramatic phase of the creation myth leads into a bridge passage in which Izanagi, cleansing himself in a river from the foulness of Yomi, gives birth to various deities from different parts of his body. The most important of these deities are Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess), born from his left eye, and from his nose a kami variously associated with the sea, the wind, the earth, and the underworld. This kami, Susa no O, becomes the enemy of his sister Amaterasu in the next sequence of *Kojiki* myth. Quarrelsome, he confronts Amaterasu in her realm of heaven, where he defeats her in a

15 Philippi, *Kojiki*, pp. 7–8.

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contest of progenitive power and "rages in victory." The several offenses committed by Susa no O in heaven include mischief directed against the settled patterns of an agricultural society (breaking down the ridges between the rice paddies) and other deeds of a possible magical significance (flaying the heavenly piebald colt with a backward flaying). They so alarm and offend Amaterasu that she hides in a cave, thus depriving the world of light. Once she has been lured out again by a mirror and a sexually arousing dance, Susa no O is punished by expulsion from heaven. That the mythology is dealing with two distinct cults is made evident by what happens next. Once Susa no O returns to earth, he changes from a disruptive force to a culture hero. By killing the food goddess he makes possible the sprouting of food grains from her corpse. Next he rescues a maiden by slaying a dragon and builds a palace for himself and his bride. His descendant Ōkuni Nushi (great country master) becomes in due course the deity of the major cultic center of Izumo on the Japan Sea, as Amaterasu was at Ise, facing out toward the Pacific. The collision of two cults and two peoples thus seems to lie under the surface of the mythic narrative. It is apparent that a compromise was worked out, for when Amaterasu sends down her own grandson to take possession of earth, the land has to be ceded by Ōkuni Nushi and his progeny. In return for giving up earthly domain, Ōkuni Nushi is guaranteed eternal worship at the Grand Shrine of Izumo, second in prestige only to that of the Sun Goddess herself at Ise. The way is then cleared for the sun lineage to extend its rule over Japan, and accounts of the reigns of the successive sovereigns occupy the second and third books of the *Kojiki*.

The *Kojiki* is thus a book of grand theme and majestic sweep. But it is also very close to the primitive earthiness of the animistic mythology on which its earlier strata are based. Anecdote and description are of a specific physicality that contributes strongly to the quality of the book as literature. The value of the *Kojiki* is in fact literary more than historiographical. Not only are the major myths recounted in a highly dramatic and vivid fashion, but the narrative also is laced through with folktales and poems. The 112 ancient songs of the *Kojiki* are a precious corpus of early oral verse, often giving evidence of an existence independent of the narrative in which they are embedded. Formally, they divide into prototypes of the *tanka* (short poem) and *chōka* (long poem), the two principal varieties of early Japanese verse. Many are without the precise five–seven syllabic structure realized probably during the seventh century, thus bespeaking a putative antiquity. The

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very first poem in the book, however, is in form a perfect thirty-one-syllable *tanka*, a fact that suggests a breadth of time in the poetic component, or perhaps the later revision of early materials. The matter of the songs is often amorous, sometimes expressed in imagery of latent sexual content, occasionally martial, and characteristically traditional or "folk" in type. The traditional reciters of the long songs, which may have been danced or enacted in some manner, are occasionally named in the text, though the usual convention is that the person in the story makes up the poem on the spur of the moment. Structurally, many of the songs show the typical expository order of early Japanese verse, in which preposited phrases of a metaphorical or analogical nature lead, often by means of word play, into the main statement of the poem.

Song and story thus constitute much of the appeal of this earliest Japanese book. Even the accounts of the sovereigns concentrate as much or more on their backstage lives – their amorous entanglements or minor incidents of their reigns – as on matters of state. The many amours of the emperors Nintoku and Yūryaku are cases in point. The high incidence of poetry in these passages makes them into poem-tales foreshadowing a major genre of semifiction that developed in the tenth century. And yet the *Kojiki* is not purely anecdotal; it is a heady brew of history, myth, folktale, and poetry, in which the historical narrative asserts itself as the main organizational thrust, dragging along a great accumulation of traditions, all of which are treated with equal credence. It is as if George Washington's chopping down his father's cherry tree received equal billing with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, or King Arthur and the Round Table were treated as historical in the same sense as King John and *Magna Carta*. A story such as that of Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, "the brave of Yamato," contains the elements of heroic saga and points to the value of the *Kojiki* for an understanding of the formative ideals of the race. Yamato Takeru is wily, bloody, and bold but also loyal and naive. His wiliness is toward his enemies, his naïveté toward received authority. In the process of conquering his father's enemies, he incurs a curse for going too far – overstepping the boundary of human limitations and offending a kami. Sickening to death as a result of this act of hubris, Yamato Takeru becomes melancholy and sings of his longing for home. He dies, and his spirit turns into a great white bird and flies away. A particularly Japanese sense of tragedy emerges from this hero-tale, a tragedy of a failed hero and a major theme in later legend, literature,

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and historical event. The feeling conveyed is one of pathos, an awareness of the fragility of glory.[16]

The *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan) is written in Chinese, its compilers having apparently disdained the linguistic compromise worked out for the *Kojiki*. It too is an outgrowth of the historiographical work ordered by Emperor Temmu in 681. In thirty books, it covers Japanese history from its beginning to the abdication of Empress Jitō in 697. It was completed and presented to Empress Genshō in 720 by Prince Toneri (677–735), a son of Emperor Temmu. Others involved in the project at its inception in the 680s included imperial princes Kawashima (657–691) and Osakabe (d. 705), heading up a staff of ten. The result of their labors was adopted as the official history, the first of a series that ultimately extended to six (the *Rikkokushi* or Six national histories), inspired by and partially modeled on the Chinese dynastic histories. It seems probable that the *Kojiki* was relegated to a subsidiary status and was soon the victim of neglect.

In a sense, the *Nihon shoki* is everything the *Kojiki* is and more. The same mythology is recounted in the early books, and other versions of many of the same songs and stories can be found. The mythological portion of the narrative is in fact longer and more elaborate than that of the *Kojiki*, because the compilers quote a number of often conflicting accounts for each of the major myths, indicating that the sources available were much more numerous than might be supposed from a reading of the earlier work. In one version, for instance, Izanagi and Izanami create the Sun Goddess by means of sexual reproduction, rather than her being born from the ablutions of the estranged male parent. It is interesting to note that the heroic and amorous exploits of the deity Ōkuni Nushi are missing from the *Nihon shoki*, evidence perhaps of a further downgrading of the Izumo cult. In addition to its plethora of material on most of the other myths, the *Nihon shoki* presents a chronicle of historical events that simply dwarfs what is to be found in the *Kojiki*. As it approaches the time of the chroniclers, the narrative becomes increasingly prosaic, detailed, focused on public rather than private matters, and, presumably, reliable. In other words, the *Nihon shoki* is somewhat more valuable as history than as literature, whereas the reverse is true of the *Kojiki*. Nevertheless, the *Nihon shoki* is by no means to be accepted uncritically as a historical source,

16 Takagi Ichinosuke treated the Yamato Takeru story in "Yamato Takeru no Mikoto to rōman seishin," one of the essays in his book *Yoshino no ayu* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1943). The theme was also explored by Ivan Morris in *The Nobility of Failure* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), pp. 1–13.

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even in its nonmythological sections. The parts dealing with relations between Japan and Korea in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries are a good case in point. Especially in the earlier ranges of this period, the account is almost impossible to follow, much less to credit, in its description of Japanese campaigns on the peninsula and the relations among Yamato, Paekche, and Silla. The tendentious nature of Japanese claims on their Korean neighbors, accepted totally by the authors, is obvious, but how to untangle the resulting web of distortion and self-glorification is by no means clear.[17] These limitations on the value of the *Nihon shoki* as history by no means differentiate it from the *Kojiki*. The latter is simply less copious and more naive in its tendentiousness. In this very naïveté in fact resides much of the appeal of the earlier and shorter book: The *Kojiki* has not been as thoroughly sinicized as has the *Nihon shoki*. This fact is obvious from the linguistic medium employed by each, but the difference strongly colors even the characterization of certain semihistorical figures. For instance, the story of Yamato Takeru in the *Kojiki* concentrates on the guile, violence, loyalty, and hubris of the hero – he emerges strongly as a simple and tragic figure, sketched in with a few strokes in a spare and telling narrative. In the *Nihon shoki*, however, the same character spouts reams of high Confucian sentiment, and his death with songs on his lips is replaced by a long speech in which he takes his parting in phrases conned from Chinese sources. The effect is noble but remote from the unpretentious lyricism of the Japanese.

Another set of writings from the eighth century are the *fudoki*, or local gazetteers. In 713 Empress Gemmei ordered each province to compile a record of its topography, products, and local lore. Only the *Izumo fudoki* survives intact; the gazetteers of Harima, Bungo, Hitachi, and Hizen are partially preserved, and fragments of a number of others have come down thanks to being quoted in various works. The language of the *fudoki* is basically Chinese, with the exception of certain passages that give verbatim accounts of local tradition, in which phonetic representations of Japanese grammatical elements intrude on the Chinese syntax. The poems are represented phonetically as in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and the same is of course true of Japanese names. The initiative for compiling the *fudoki* was part of the same general effort to conform to Chinese practices that led to the histories and poetic anthologies. Descriptions of the topographical,

17 For a discussion and analysis of historical accounts of insular–peninsular relations at this period, see Ledyard, "Galloping Away with the Horseriders," pp. 238–42.

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botanical, zoological, and legendary features of local areas date back at least to the *Shan-hai ching* (Classic of mountains and seas) in China, and local gazetteers flourished particularly in the Six Dynasties, the period in China so influential on the early Japanese.[18] Local information of a similar nature was also incorporated in dynastic histories. It seems that the Japanese *fudoki* were the victims of official neglect, however, in view of the fragmentary state of their preservation. The portions that remain are of semiliterary interest, for along with the statistics of distances and numbers of shrines and villages are included a scattering of local legends and myths. The myths of Izumo, for instance, show yet other versions of the material edited in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. It is apparent that the compilers of the national histories picked and chose from abundant local material. In this respect, study of the remaining *fudoki* is important to understanding early Japan, and it is unfortunate that the entire set of these documents no longer exists.

Another feature of the *fudoki* is the prominence given to explanations of the origins of place names. This seems to have been among the principal preoccupations of the compilers. Some explanations are straightforward and plausible, for example, a place is called Kuroda (black field) because its soil is black. Others contain references to mythology, as in the case of a community named Tatenuhi (shield sewing), alleged to refer to the place where "[the god] Futsunushi stitched up a rip in his sturdy shield of heaven."[19] This interest in etymology was no accident: The edict ordering the compilation of the *fudoki* directed the compilers to record the "origins of the names of mountains, rivers, plains and fields," as well as to give "good characters" to the names of the administrative units.[20] An interest in origins as well as in the auspicious and "correct" is everywhere present in ancient Japanese writings, evidence of parallel antiquarian and "civilizing" tendencies. The *fudoki* also contain anecdotes that belong to *setsuwa* literature, the genre of tales, often of a supernatural character, that began with the chronicles but flourished most notably in the great collections of the twelfth century and later. Such a story is that of the shark that kills a young girl and then is escorted to her bereaved father

18 The *Shan-hai-ching* is attributed to Po I, assistant of the legendary ruler Yü who tamed the floodwaters in Chinese antiquity. The core of the work is probably late Chou with later additions. Like the Japanese *fudoki*, it combines geographical information with fantastic stories.

19 Michiko Yamaguchi Aoki, trans., *Izumo fudoki* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971), p. 84.

20 Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Shoku Nihongi, Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1935), vol. 2, p. 52.

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for punishment by a hundred other sharks in answer to the father's prayers to the gods.

The compilation of history, local tradition, and topographical data was a literate activity that the Japanese learned from Chinese example. So also were the composition and compilation of poems. We have already noted the poetic content of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki,* where men and women, emperors and gods often speak in verse. The verse is native, linguistically the most stubbornly native matrix with which the compilers had to work. But by the late seventh century, Chinese-style education among Japanese aristocrats and Buddhist clergy had led to participation in another Chinese cultural activity, the composition of *kanshi,* or Chinese poetry. Poetry to the Chinese was both a high art and something of a social necessity. In both respects it had much to teach the Japanese, and it is hardly fortuitous that Japanese poetry, too, came to be characterized by a similar dual nature. The loftier reaches of Chinese poetic accomplishment were from the beginning something toward which the Japanese might strive but which in the nature of things they were unlikely to attain. And why indeed as newly literate foreigners should they have attempted to master a highly complex thousand-year-old art when they had, as the early chronicles testify, a living poetic tradition of their own? The answer must be twofold: The evidence is overwhelming that the Japanese found certain aspects of Chinese civilization extremely attractive and that among these were those that impressed by visual splendor or dazzling verbal intricacy. Buddhist sculpture, painting, and architecture, and the artifice of Six Dynasties poetry attracted Japanese attention and emulation and began, in the Asuka–Nara period, traditions of mastery that lasted almost into our own time. Technical difficulties have always been a challenge, not a deterrent, to the Japanese. The other part of the answer is that once they had entered the Chinese cultural sphere, the Japanese came to participate in the social necessity referred to earlier. The Japanese began sending embassies to China in 600. Diplomatic and cultural exchange among East Asian countries involved certain niceties, among which was the composition of suitably felicitous or regretful poems at state banquets and farewell dinners. In order to hold up their heads before their hosts, the Japanese at some point had to learn how to create Chinese verses. They themselves served as hosts to Korean embassies, where the same niceties had to be observed. Chinese was the language of diplomacy as well as of learning and religion. Furthermore, as the Japanese increasingly reformed their state along the Chinese model in the seventh and eighth centuries, they wished to

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appear civilized even among themselves, with no foreigners looking on. "No foreigners" is a delicate point, however, inasmuch as Japanese society at this time contained a large element of recent continental immigrants, largely from the Korean states. These so-called *kikajin* were influential, indeed indispensable, to fostering arts, crafts, and learning in Asuka–Nara Japan. *Kikajin* families became fully Japanese in due course, and their skills spread throughout Japanese society.

Needless to say, it is not known when the first Chinese poem was written in Japan. But it seems certain that the activity had taken hold by the reign of Emperor Tenji (661–71), as there are references to both the emperor and his courtiers taking part in literary banquets. "No mere hundred were their compositions" according to the preface of the *Kaifūsō*. An elegant Chinese-style literary atmosphere at the Ōmi court is also evidenced in the *Man'yōshū* in a famous *chōka* debating the relative merits of spring and fall.[21] It seems that by the 670s, thanks to the Chinese influence, literature was a recognized avocation existing apart from myth, ritual, and history. But almost none of the Chinese poetic works of the Ōmi court have survived; presumably they were destroyed in the Jinshin war of 672 in which the capital at Ōmi was burned and power violently transferred from Tenji's son Prince Ōtomo to his brother Prince Ōama (Emperor Temmu). There are, to be sure, two surviving poems written by the unfortunate Prince Ōtomo (648–72) himself. These two *chüeh-chü*, or four-line stanzas, are thus the oldest Chinese verses written by a Japanese to come down to us. One is a felicitous banquet poem on the brilliance of his father's reign, and the other is a meditation on his own unfitness to rule. This latter has a pathetic irony, as Ōtomo died in the fall of the Ōmi capital in 672 after no more than a few months on the throne. Another early poet in the Chinese mode is Prince Ōtsu (663–86), who likewise came to a bad end, becoming involved in an abortive coup d'état and being condemned to obligatory suicide in 686. He left touching farewell poems in both Chinese and Japanese.[22]

The principal corpus of Chinese verse (*kanshi*) composed in Japan during the Asuka–Nara period is to be found in the *Kaifūsō* (Fond recollections of poetry), a collection of 120 poems compiled in 751 by an unknown anthologist. Sixty-four named poets are represented.

21 The poem is MYS I:16, by Princess Nukata, who lived from the 630s to the 690s. Her poem apparently was composed on a formal literary occasion at court in the 660s.

22 See MYS 3:416, *Kaifūsō* 7. Kojima suggests that Prince Ōtsu's Chinese farewell poem is likely to have been modeled closely on a Six Dynasties antecedent. See Kojima, *Jōdai Nihon bungaku to Chūgoku bungaku*, vol. 3 (1971), p. 1262.

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There are nobles, monks, and a number of princes, including Ōtomo and Ōtsu, and Emperor Mommu (683–707) as well. All the poems are in the Chinese poetic *shih* form, with rhymes at the ends of the even-numbered lines. One rhyme runs through an entire poem. The line length is determined for each poem as either five or seven syllables (unlike *waka*, in which the fives and sevens alternate). Four and eight lines are the most common poem lengths. The poems in the *Kaifūsō* are of the "old *shih*" type; that is, they do not observe the strict rules of tonal parallelism and antithesis that were mandatory in the "regulated *shih*" that flourished in China starting with the T'ang period. The verses in the *Kaifūsō*, and all the Japanese *kanshi* of its time, are oriented not toward the contemporary masterworks of T'ang but toward the earlier Six Dynasties, specifically the decadent late Six Dynasties poetry of the sixth century. In this poetry, artifice often became artificiality, and a determined divorcement had been effected from any sort of straightforward statement and from anything but the most refined attitudes and aristocratic content. This kind of poetry, learned from anthologies such as the *Wen-hsüan* and *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung*, remained highly admired in Japan long after it passed out of favor in China, with results that were far-reaching in the formation of Japanese taste and that ultimately found their way into *waka* and a new prose literature. Banquet poems, predictably of little depth, make up a large proportion of the content of the *Kaifūsō*. The verse is in any case preponderantly imitative and perhaps does not deserve a high place in the history of Japanese literature, of which it nevertheless – despite its linguistic distinctiveness – forms a part. Culturally, however, it represents an important pole of Japanese orientation, not only in the Asuka–Nara period but later as well. Partially through efforts like those seen in the *Kaifūsō*, the Japanese ultimately became not imitators of China but participants in China-centered East Asian civilization. The content of the *Kaifūsō* represents some of their proudest early school exercises. And in any case it would be unfair to dismiss all these verses as devoid of literary merit. In some at least, the voice of the poet comes through the alien conventions to good effect.

A certain number of *kanshi* (Chinese poems), as well as *kambun* (Chinese prose) passages, are also preserved in the *Man'yōshū*. The *Man'yōshū* is unquestionably the great literary monument of the Asuka–Nara period, the culmination and repository of all that Japanese poetic culture had become up until that time. It is the earliest extant *waka* anthology, and its enormous bulk includes over 4,500 poems, dating from the year 759 backward for an indeterminate span,

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but surely well over a century. The earliest attributions are a set of four *tanka* ascribed to Iwanohime, a consort of the fourth- or fifth-century monarch Nintoku. A healthy skepticism is recommended in regard to all such extremely early attributions. Even the infinitely more "primitive" songs associated with Iwanohime in the *Kojiki* are thought to have been placed in her mouth by the compilers. The four *Man'yōshū tanka* are perfectly realized and quite lovely examples of a *waka* style that one might guess was not achieved earlier than the seventh century. Most of the content of the *Man'yōshū* dates from after the Jinshin war of 672, an event that seems echoed in the strains of some of the more majestic *chōka* or long poems that are an outstanding feature of the collection.

There are various ways of periodizing the *Man'yōshū*. One meaningful division of the content would be into a scattering of poems, some perhaps very old, before Jinshin; the poetry of the period from 672 to the foundation of the Nara in 710, dominated politically by the victors in the Jinshin war and their heirs and poetically by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro; and the Nara period up to the terminal date in the *Man'yōshū* of 759, a period when urban sophistication began to produce a new and in some ways radically different attitude toward literary creativity. It is in this last period in which the Chinese content of the *Man'yōshū* comes to the fore and when the compilation of the anthology probably began. Both the Chinese content and the compilation are associated with the Ōtomo clan and its literary adherents. Book 5 of the *Man'yōshū*, made up of compositions of the circle of Ōtomo no Tabito (665–731) and his crony Yamanoue no Okura (660–ca. 733), bulks large in this regard. Both Tabito and Okura (himself an anthologist) were practitioners of the new skills in Chinese literary prose and poetry, as well as of *waka*, and Tabito is represented by a *shih* in the *Kaifūsō*. Tabito's son Yakamochi (718–85) was the probable main compiler of the *Man'yōshū*, and along with being the most extensively preserved (over four hundred poems) *waka* poet in the collection, he recorded several interesting exchanges in Chinese with his cousin Ōtomo no Ikenushi. These, from a period in the 740s when Yakamochi was governor of Etchū Province, show him and Ikenushi in the roles of Chinese-style literary gentlemen, complimenting each other on their verses and celebrating the joys of male companionship. Both the verse and the prose are highly flowery, representing in this regard standards of taste appropriate to their Six Dynasties inspiration. But the theme of friendship is one more broadly based in the ethos of Chinese poetry, and it is apparent that it provided these early

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Japanese poets with an option not available in the tradition of their own poetry. *Waka* remained oriented toward romantic love between the sexes; friendship between men for some reason continued to be embedded in the poetic conventions of the Chinese verse that had developed it as a primary concern. In this respect a Nara poet like Yakamochi was operating in dual personae, able to switch at will from his Japanese to his Chinese self. It was during the Nara period that this characteristic of Japanese high culture reached its early maturity.

The *Man'yōshū* is thus an anthology of poetry in the two languages, a fact usually overlooked because the Japanese content looms much larger. In the traditional way of editing the *Man'yōshū*, the Chinese poems were not even given numbers, as if they were mere appendages to the *waka*, and the several long Chinese prose passages were not numbered either. This approach unfortunately obscures what the *Man'yōshū* really is – a collection of *waka*, *kanshi*, and *kambun*, of literary efforts in both languages in use at the time of its compilation. It is a true product of the developing hybrid culture out of which it came.

Nevertheless, the *Man'yōshū*'s primary significance is as the great compendium of early Japanese poetry. Because the time period that its content covers is so long and the content itself is so large, it would be difficult to characterize the anthology in simple terms. The inspiration for its compilation was ultimately Chinese – perhaps it was to be the Japanese answer to the *Wen-hsüan*, which also contains both prose and poetry. Unfortunately, however, the *Man'yōshū* has no preface to state the compilers' aims, and so we can only deduce from the book itself and our knowledge of its time. Several poems and all of the prose – headnotes, footnotes, correspondence, and experiments in essay and story form – are in Chinese. And the modal categories that form part of the complex (never a fully rationalized organizational scheme) are also Chinese. The book, as a book, is a product of a sinicized culture. But within this "foreign" framework is found the heart of a linguistically unadulterated native ethos, the largest concentration of what is most purely "Japanese" on the level of artistic expression to come down from these early centuries. It is this aspect of the *Man'yōshū* – its role as the repository of the living voices of all levels of society and as the embodiment of a semimystical nativist "Japanese spirit" – that has been stressed at least since the work of the national scholars in the Tokugawa period.

The Japanese content of the *Man'yōshū* consists of round numbers of approximately 260 *chōka*, 60 *sedōka*, and 4,200 *tanka*, the three

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main poetic forms existing at the time of its compilation. All three forms are based on syllable count, alternating lines of five and seven syllables constituting the basic rhythm. A *tanka* (short poem) is defined as five such lines in the pattern 5–7–5–7–7. *Tanka* are numerically by far the dominant form and remained as the staple of *waka* poetry after the disappearance of the *chōka* and *sedōka*. The *sedōka* (head-repeated poem) consists of two tercets: 5–7–7–5–7–7. The *chōka* (long poem) has no set length and, as it came to be defined in the seventh century, usually took the form of a regular alternation of five- and seven-syllable lines, with an extra seven-syllable line at the end, and was often followed by one or more envoys in *tanka* form. Although numerically inferior to *tanka*, the *chōka* provided the major Man'yō poets with some of their choicest opportunities, ones that were not to be found again in Japanese poetry for a long while.

About 530 named poets are represented in the *Man'yōshū*, ranging socially from monarchs to peasants and geographically from the eastland frontier to the islands of Tsushima between Japan and Korea. There is also an exceptionally large body of anonymous poetry. Most of the named poets are men and women of the court, but the broad interest and sympathy of the compilers are evident in the inclusion of verses by outlanders and the common people. The *Man'yōshū* is often praised by the Japanese for the straightforwardness and wholeheartedness of its poetry, and indeed those qualities form an essential part of its appeal. Expressions of loyalty, admiration for nature, and amorous intent are effective partially because of their open intensity. Both nature and emotions are represented in the large in much of the most characteristic poetry. A morning-of-the-world freshness does hover about the anthology. But there is an artfulness, that is, an art, a use of conventions implying that verse after all carries expectations different from those of prose, about even simple and naive poetry, about even the generally more "primitive" poems in the chronicles. The use of preposited modifying structures – the *jo* (preface) and the *makura-kotoba* (pillow word) – is a prominent example of such artfulness. Not all poems embody such structures, but many of the apparently earliest ones do. Deliberate refraining from rhetorical adornment may itself be a sign of artistry in such a tradition: The classic repose of an apparently "simple" poem can imply conscious sophistication. Much of the best Man'yō poetry is not simple by any definition, however. The *chōka* of Hitomaro are magnificent patterns of interlocking parallelism, with a prosody heightened by skillfully used rhetorical devices, and an inner life made complex with ironies. And then there is the

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sinified or actually Chinese content referred to earlier, the works of the Okura–Tabito–Yakamochi circle in the urbanized atmosphere of the Nara period. Complexity and plentitude describe the *Man'yōshū* more accurately than does simplicity or artlessness.

Among the major Man'yō poets, two define the boundaries of their tradition. Kakinomoto no Hitomaro is a bardic figure in his treatment of traditional themes of celebration and desolation,[23] the first and ultimate public poet of the Asuka period. Hitomaro is close to the past, and in him the archaic ethos of land and sovereignty finds its fullest and most powerful statement. His known poetic career spans the eleven years from 689 through 700, though no doubt he was active somewhat longer. The world of which he sings is that of the aftermath of the Jinshin war of 672. The generation between Jinshin and the move to Nara in 710 experienced one of the high points of imperial prestige in Japan under Temmu and his successors, and the image of the kami sovereign is central to Hitomaro's vision. Hitomaro's *chōka* on public themes are often laments, however, for dead princes and princesses and for the fallen capital at Ōmi. Hence the image of triumphant glory is made somber by the realization that time and death are more powerful than even the living kami in the palaces built to last myriad ages. A tension between life and death informs Hitomaro's work, ultimately resolved in compassionate irony. Hitomaro is not a nature poet. Though he employs natural imagery with great skill and beauty, he treats nature as a metaphor and as the home of humanity. Hitomaro's view is global. His universality is nowhere better exemplified than in a *chōka* (*Man'yōshū* [MYS] 2.220–2) he composed on finding the body of a man on Samine Island in the Inland Sea. The anonymous drowned man becomes Everyman in Hitomaro's poem. Hitomaro speaks elsewhere of his own experience of love and sorrow in elegies and private poems of parting. But although these poems are undoubtedly based on his life, he blends into them as a typical rather than an individual voice. There is no denying their intense emotional conviction, but they are universal rather than anecdotal. In the end Hitomaro is almost a mythic figure, an enunciator of the deepest feelings of his culture – not a man whom we can know, but a teacher of what it means to be a man, to be human.

In these regards Hitomaro stands in useful contrast with the great figure at the other end of the Man'yō tradition. Hitomaro was the

23 These terms are used as basic polarities in Japanese court poetry by Earl Miner in *Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 11 ff.

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creator of the grand *chōka* manner, and later poets learned from and emulated his style. Among the many who did so was Ōtomo no Yakamochi, the putative compiler of the *Man'yōshū* itself, or at least of large parts of it. Yakamochi was born after the days of Hitomaro, after the foundation of the capital at Nara. He was a man of Nara and the scion of a proud and ancient family, one with a strong literary tradition from his father's day. Yakamochi was a man of literature, a man of the written word. He looked out on what seems a modern instead of a mythic world. Preserved through his own efforts, his many *waka*, *kanshi*, and *kambun* letters allow us to see a person passionate about poetry, his family honor, and his favorite hawk and ardent in his pursuit of a number of women. We also see him as host at official banquets and as friend of his cousin Ikenushi. Yakamochi is moody, many faceted: an individual, a modern man. He suffered from a specific and situational anxiety over his political career. It is possible to know him, or to feel that one does, in a way that is totally out of the question with Hitomaro. Thus in the simplest terms Hitomaro and Yakamochi stand for the old and the new in an age of rapid transition.

Yakamochi was aware of the past in a modern way. He looked back on it as a time of lost virtue and glory. The virtue that he particularly cherished and that he wished to revive in his own day was *masuraoburi*, the manliness of the warrior. He belonged to an ancient warrior family that was losing its way in a complex and no-longer heroic modern world. Yakamochi's idealization of the past as a time of sturdy and simple loyalty is the counterpart of his anxiety over the present and future. These attitudes give his work a restlessness and a melancholy that are alien to Hitomaro. Hitomaro seems to be discovering the world and expressing it fully for the first time; Yakamochi seems to be looking back with envy and regret. Yakamochi was a self-conscious artist. That he was aware of the debt of his tradition to Hitomaro is indicated by a remark in one of his letters that he had never passed through the gates of Yama and Kaki. "Kaki" is supposed to refer to Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, and the self-deprecatory comment is a polite salute to the long-dead singer who had set the standards of his art.[24]

"Yama" in Yakamochi's remark may refer to either Yamabe no Akahito or Yamanoue no Okura, poets of a generation intermediate between Hitomaro's and Yakamochi's own. Akahito is best known as a

24 The remark comes in a letter (written in Chinese) prefatory to MYS 17: 3969–72 and is part of an extended series of exchanges between Yakamochi and his cousin Ikenushi on the occasion of Yakamochi's illness in the second and third months of 747.

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nature poet, an observer who celebrated natural beauty for its own sake. His poetry is part of a trend toward pictorializing the numinous quality of the land. Okura was a crony of Yakamochi's father Tabito and is notable as the most distinctly individual voice in the *Man'yōshū*. He created a poetry of Confucian indignation and of sympathy with the poor and the helpless. His prosody is angular and defiantly indifferent to Hitomaro's supple yet tensile periods. Okura was the most deeply sinified of the *Man'yōshū* poets, having gone to China for study in 702 with one of the recurrent official embassies. He internalized the social attitudes of Confucian propriety and of Confucian invective and incorporated them into some of the most memorable verse in the *Man'yōshū*. It is thought that Okura was of *kikajin* descent.[25]

Yakamochi seems to have thought of himself as heir to the poetic tradition and to have deliberately worked in all the styles and modes that were available to him. He is certainly the most versatile writer in the *Man'yōshū*. As a *chōka* poet he owes much to Hitomaro. He celebrated mountain scenery and local legend in the tradition of Akahito and Takahashi no Mushimaro. His amorous exchanges show him a master of the conventions of love poetry. He wrote *kanshi* and *kambun* in the style of a Chinese literatus and assumed on occasion the cloak of Confucian morality in the manner of Okura. He celebrated the companionship of friend and friend. He wrote of matters of state and of his private life. At banquets he was the genial and poetic host, as his father had been in the days of Yakamochi's boyhood at Dazai-fu in Kyushu. Yakamochi was interested in poetry in all its forms and especially in collecting the poems of the provincial commoners who served as conscript soldiers in the military system of his day. He himself experimented with the topic of the sorrows of the frontier guard. And in addition to all this, Yakamochi brought into poetry a new note of self-conscious melancholy reflection that was a sign that the tradition was expending its forces but that also was a foretaste of the aesthetic of *aware* (wistful awareness of perishable beauty) that imbued much of the courtly literature of the succeeding age. As an anthologist Yakamochi was the first of a series of literary men – Ki no Tsurayuki and Fujiwara no Teika played similar roles later – into whose hands the poetic tradition came and who passed it on with their own stamp on it.

The last poem in the *Man'yōshū* was written on New Year's Day of the year corresponding to 759; it is a felicitous banquet poem in which

25 The case for Okura as a Korean born in Paekche and brought to Japan soon after birth is argued by Nakanishi Susumu in *Yamanoue no Okura* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1973), pp. 23–45.

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Yakamochi, then serving as governor of Inaba Province, wishes his subordinates endless good fortune. Ironically, the poetic tradition itself was about to undergo the most drastic curtailment in its entire history. The eighth century, despite the imposing achievements and implied stability of the imperial institution in its first "permanent" capital, was a time of recurrent political crisis. By mid-century the long-standing rivalry between the Fujiwara and the Tachibana was creating an atmosphere of continual tension. In 756 the ex-emperor Shōmu died, removing the last restraint on the ambitions of Fujiwara no Nakamaro (706–64), the adviser to Empress Kōken, Shōmu's daughter, and on the resentment of Tachibana no Naramaro (d. 757), the son of the chief minister, Tachibana no Moroe (684–757). Naramaro attemped a coup d'état against Kōken and Nakamaro the following year but failed. He and other members of the Tachibana party were put to death. The Ōtomo were allies of the Tachibana and suffered devastating losses as a result of the abortive coup. Yakamochi had refused to join the plotters, remaining loyal to his ideal of *masurao* fidelity, but as head of the Ōtomo clan he was suspect and out of favor at court. In 758 he was sent off to be governor of Inaba. This was a comedown for Yakamochi, who had already served as governor of Etchū, a superior province, ten years earlier. The rest of his career was beset by vicissitudes, and even after he died in 785 he was posthumously linked to the assassination of Fujiwara no Tanetsugu, the official in charge of building a new capital to replace Nara at Nagaoka. The murder was carried out by two members of the Ōtomo clan, and Yakamochi suffered in the general disgrace by being posthumously stripped of rank and having his ashes sent into exile with his son to the Oki Islands. His titles and rank were restored in an amnesty granted in 806.

All of these events affected Japanese poetry in various and sometimes unexpected ways. The political turmoil surrounding Yakamochi after his return to the capital from his governorship of Etchū in 751 seems to have distracted him from poetry and to have led to deepening melancholy. It is possible that he felt poetry to be no longer relevant to his own life or to the events of the times. In any case, his productivity seems to have fallen off, and from 759 until his death in 785 nothing remains. It is possible that much has been lost, or he may simply have fallen silent. In any case, the history of Man'yō poetry ends long before the death of its last great exponent. The increasing popularity of composition in Chinese may also have led to the decline of interest and skill in writing *chōka*, a form that never revived significantly after

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the eighth century. The first three imperial anthologies of poetry, commissioned early in the ninth century, were of *kanshi*, not *waka*.

Ironically, Yakamochi's posthumous disgrace may have preserved the *Man'yōshū* and with it the whole pre-Heian tradition of Japanese poetry. As part of the decree against the Ōtomo, Yakamochi's property was sequestered in 785, and his papers taken into government custody. It seems likely that the *Man'yōshū* was among these and thus was under official seal until after the transfer of the capital to Heian in 794. It may then have become available for scholars after the punitive edicts were rescinded in 806, surviving as the sole relic of what may have been a much larger corpus of Asuka–Nara poetry.

The major written works that have come down from the Nara period are those just described: the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, the *fudoki*, the *Kaifūsō*, and the *Man'yōshū*. They will certainly serve more than adequately to represent Asuka–Nara poetry and historiography, the two principal kinds of writing. They are not the only works that were written in the period, however. There is evidence of some that did not survive, the historiographical projects of Prince Shōtoku, for instance, or the poetic collections referred to in the *Man'yōshū* and only partially incorporated into that work. Yamanoue no Okura we know was the compiler of the *Ruiju karin* (Classified forest of poetry), which has not come down to us intact.

A work that did survive and that is of some interest for a study of the poetry of the period is the *Kakyō hyōshiki*, by Fujiwara no Hamanari (724–90). *Kakyō hyōshiki* (Standard rules for the classic of songs) was written in 772 and presented to Emperor Kōnin (709–81), apparently as an authoritative statement on Japanese poetry. Hamanari, an official at the Nara court, shows more acquaintance with Chinese poetic theory than understanding of Japanese poetic practice as found in the *Man'yōshū*. He elaborates a complex theory of rhyme for *waka* and discriminates seven "poetic ills" (*kabyō*) derived from Six Dynasties criticism, setting up as well several stylistic categories.[26] Because several poems quoted in the *Kakyō hyōshiki* appear in the *Man'yōshū* with different attributions, it is quite plausible that the great anthology was unknown to Hamanari and was in fact still a

26 Hamanari's "seven ills" are certain types of phonetic repetition; his list is inspired by the "eight poetic ills" of Six Dynasties criticism first enunciated by Shen Yüeh (441–513) in *Shih p'in*. His Chinese orientation leads him to prescribe rhyme for *waka*. He allows only vowel correspondence, however, and proscribes full consonant–vowel duplication. The best study of this subject is Judith N. Rabinovitch, "Wasp Waists and Monkey Tails: A Translation and Study of *uta no shiki* (*Kakyō hyōshiki*) [772] by Fujiwara no Hamanari," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51 (1991).

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private possession of his contemporary Ōtomo no Yakamochi. Hamanari, working during a period from which nothing by Yakamochi remains, shows the increasing focus on Chinese literary culture already dominating the court. The *Kakyō hyōshiki*, the earliest Japanese document in poetic criticism, is a curious product of those times. Although seriously misconceived, it has value in the history of thought as an attempt to understand one's own culture through foreign eyes. And the theory of the "poetic ills" was by no means laid to rest with Hamanari; it was still being discussed four hundred years later.[27]

The prose text of the *Kakyō hyōshiki* is in Chinese, and the poems are spelled out in phonogram (*man'yōgana*) orthography. Another *kambun* document with phonetic usages for poems, proper nouns, and the like that has come down from Asuka–Nara times is the *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu* (Anecdotes of the sovereign dharma King Shōtoku of the Upper Palace), a collection of records concerning Prince Shōtoku probably dating from the early eight century. It is the source of several anecdotes, often of a miraculous character, about the revered scholar-statesman-sage. In this respect it is not unlike the accounts incorported into the *Nihon shoki* itself; both provide early evidence of what became a Prince Shōtoku cult that endured until modern times. One pious anecdote recounts how the prince, studying Buddhist texts with a Korean master, was stumped by a difficult passage in the Lotus Sutra. A golden man came to the prince in a dream and revealed the meaning of the passage. The Korean master returned to Korea with the interpretation and, on later hearing of the prince's death, prayed to die on its anniversary and meet him in the Pure Land. According to the account, this wish was granted. This Buddhist *setsuwa* is precisely the sort of narrative found in large numbers in Heian and later collections. Thus the *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu*, together with the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*, stands at the beginning of a major strand of Japanese literature that is known to modern scholarship as *setsuwa bungaku*. It also incorporates three poems by one Kose no Mitsue on the prince's death, in this respect, too, being similar to the chronicles in exemplifying at its outset the literature's fondness for juxtaposing prose and verse. The *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu* consists of five textual layers, the earliest of which, genealogical in nature, probably stem from the traditions of the Hōryū-ji, Gangō-ji, and other ancient temples and date from the first

27 Fujiwara no Toshiyori (?1057–1129) discusses the concept in *Shunrai zuinō* (ca. 1115). Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204) also mentions it in *Korai fūteishō* (1197). Both writers are critical of using these negative categories as guides in composition. Hashimoto Fumio, ed., *Karonshū, Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1975), vol. 20, pp. 57, 357–8.

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decade of the eighth century. The anecdotal strata are probably slightly later, perhaps recorded in their present form after the compilation of the *Nihon shoki* in 720. The identity of the compiler of these materials is not known.

Another minor eighth-century text of considerable interest has been preserved in a stone inscription. It consists of twenty-one devotional verses carved on a stele at the Yakushi-ji in Nara, verses that are known as the *bussokuseki no uta* after the incised representation of the Buddha's footprint (*bussokuseki*) that they accompany. They are in the syllabic form 5–7–5–7–7–7, of which they constitute the chief remaining corpus and which hence is called the "Buddha's footprint stone poem form." It consists of a *tanka* plus an extra seven-syllable line serving as a refrain. These poems are a liturgy of the circumambulation of the footprint icon and therefore of the worship of Śakyamuni, the historical Buddha, but also of Bhaisajya-guru or Yakushi, the healing Buddha. They are arranged in intricate patterns of association and progression stemming partially from their sources in the "twelve great vows of Bhaisajya-guru" as set forth in three Buddhist canonical texts. The twenty-one poems are engraved in phonogram orthography, a fact that makes them important to the study of Japanese phonology. Their date and author or authors are unknown, but the accompanying footprint stone has a *kambun* inscription dated in correspondence with 753. It has been argued that the poems are by various unknown hands, later arranged into a sequence (also by an unknown person) for artistic and doctrinal effect. The traditional attribution was to Fun'ya no Chinu (693–770), the donor of the icon stone.[28]

The *Nihon shoki* covers the history of Japan to 697. It is the first of a group of official annals known as the *Rikkokushi* (Six national histories). All are in *kambun*, and together they chronicle events from earliest times to the year 887. It is the second of these histories, the *Shoku Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan continued), that deals with the Nara period, covering the years 697–791. It was completed and presented to Emperor Kammu (737–806) in 797, just after the move to the new Heian capital. The compilation took place in several stages during the eighth century and involved at least eight scholars.[29] The *Shoku Nihongi* is principally of value as history, being (like the later

28 The most commanding study of this subject is by Roy Andrew Miller, "*The Footprints of the Buddha*": *An Eighth-Century Old Japanese Poetic Sequence* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1975).

29 Imperial commissions for this work were issued in the reigns of Junnin (758–64), Kōnin (770–81), and Kammu (781–806). The final stages of the project were under the direction of Fujiwara no Tsugutada (727–96) and Sugano no Mamichi (ca. 738–ca. 811).

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chapters of the *Nihon shoki*) a chronicle of political events seen from the viewpoint of the court. Its annals are distant from the rich matrix of myth and song out of which the compilers of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* wove the fabrics of their early narratives. But it has its own linguistic and semiliterary interest as the chief repository of the *semmyō*, a form of imperial proclamation in native Yamato speech, recorded in a unique style known as *semmyōtai*. This consists of an attempt to write Japanese with a combination of semantic and phonetic uses of characters and with the occasional intrusion of Chinese grammar meant to be reinterpreted as Japanese constructions. In these respects *semmyō* resemble some of the orthography of the *Man'yōshū*. The unique feature of *semmyōtai*, however, is that particles and inflections are written small, in phonogram orthography, so that they stand out from the rest of the text and facilitate its reading. *Semmyō* were read aloud – proclaimed – in public by officials, and the quality of oral delivery apparently was considered of some importance. There are sixty-two of these proclamations preserved in the *Shoku Nihongi*. Their subjects include the elevation of a consort to the rank of empress, the dedication of the Great Buddha at the Tōdai-ji, and the announcement of the discovery of gold in Michinoku. The texts sometimes have a formal and rhetorical splendor that qualifies them for consideration as literature. Ōtomo no Yakamochi seems to have adapted Emperor Shōmu's proclamation on the discovery of gold, issued in 749, into his *chōka* on the same subject (MYS 18.4094). The text of this poem bears a close resemblance to the proclamation with its recounting of the emperor's ambition to serve his people by erecting a great Vairocana, his worry about insufficient gold for the gilding, his relief at the report of new mines, his appeal for unity among his subjects, and his hortatory account of the loyalty of the Ōtomo. Both poem and proclamation incorporate an ancient Ōtomo song:

If we go on the sea,
Our dead are sodden in water;
If we go on the mountains,
Our dead are grown over with grass.
We shall die
By the side of our lord,
We shall not die in peace.[30]

30 Mikanagi Kiyotake, ed., *Semmyō shōshaku* (Tokyo: Yūbun shoin, 1936), p. 138. Yakamochi alters the last line of the song to *Kaerimi wa / seji to kotodate*, "They vowed they would never look back."

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The periodic, oratorical quality of the *semmyō* of the *Shoku Nihongi* is attenuated in examples found scattered in later *Rikkokushi,* in which the linguistic purity of the *semmyō* is compromised by Chinese loanwords and the influence of *kambun* syntax. Earlier proclamations, in the *Nihon shoki,* are translated into *kambun* by the compilers, and no proclamations of this nature are to be found in the *Kojiki.* Thus the *Shoku Nihongi* remains the main repository of a significant form of literary Japanese and of Japanese literature.

Still another group of official texts should be mentioned at this point. These are the Shinto ritual prayers known as *norito,* twenty-seven of which are preserved in Book 8 of the *Engishiki.* The *Engishiki* is a collection of procedures (*shiki*) compiled in the Engi era (901–23) and completed in 927. The older among the *norito* probably date to the seventh and eighth centuries. Their texts are linguistically and orthographically similar to the *semmyō,* employing a hybrid Sino-Japanese style, with particles written small. The result is intended to be read in pure Japanese, though as with all texts discussed in this chapter, the orthographic vehicle is made up exclusively of Chinese characters, whether used semantically or phonetically. The *norito* also resemble the *semmyō* in their rhetoric, which is that of the incantation, based on the repetition of formulaic phraseology. The *norito* are prayers addressed to various kami and recited on special occasions of cultic significance. There are prayers for rich harvest, prayers to the kami of important shrines, invocations of protective kami such as those of gates, and liturgies of exorcism. A *norito* typically specifies the blessings desired and details the offerings to be made to obtain them. *Norito* also sometimes contain passages of myth. The officiant often begins by addressing the assembled priests and worshipers before taking up the burden of his petition to the kami. The language of the *norito,* solemn and designed to create a feeling of numinous awe, resembles certain passages of *Man'yōshū* poetry, particularly the *chōka* of Hitomaro. It is apparent that the author of the *Minazuki tsugomori no ōharae* (Great exorcism of the last day of the sixth month) either drew on the same source of ritual phraseology as Hitomaro did in his lament on the death of Prince Hinamishi (MYS 2.167) or that one author was familiar with the other's work. The style of the *norito* of the *Toshigoi no matsuri* (Grain-petitioning festival) is particularly evocative of the grand *chōka* manner. It is not known who composed these *norito,* but they might have been created by members of the sacerdotal Imibe and Nakatomi families or by officials of the Council of Kami Affairs

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(Jingikan). In their older strata they probably took form during that fertile period when the language perfected its potential as a vehicle for ritual and, out of that, made poetry, the period of which Hitomaro was the ultimate expression.

MUSIC AND DANCE

The pervasive role of song in ancient Japanese society has already been touched on in the discussion of literature. The chronicles provide evidence of several named kinds of singing, such as "kami words" (*kamigatari*), "country measures" (*hinaburi*), "songs of yearning for the homeland" (*kunishinohiuta*), "drinking songs" (*sakagura no uta*), and "quiet songs" (*shizuuta*). A "winecup song" (*ukiuta*) accompanies the offering of a flagon to the emperor. There were also *ageuta* and *shirageuta*, in which the voice was apparently to be raised either throughout or at the end of the song, and "responses to quiet songs" (*shizuuta no utaigaishi*), thought to have been sung at a fast tempo. "Country measures" had their counterpart in "courtly measures" (*miyahitoburi*); both were named after particular songs and apparently could refer to other songs sung to those tunes. The notation "lowered part" (*kataoroshi*) presumably referred to the lowering of the voice or relaxing of the tempo in a two-part song. A more detailed notation in the *Nihon shoki* gives further insight into manner of performance: "Even now when this song is sung in the music bureau, the tempo of the hand clapping and the rise and fall of the vocal part are preserved."[31] The song in question is described as a *Kumeuta*, that is, a song traditional to the Kume clan of ancient warriors serving Yamato kings. It accompanied the *Kumemai* or "Kume dance." A primitive victory song of the Kumebe tells how enemy warriors were killed by a ruse (*Nihon shoki* 10):

When our troops heard the song, they all drew their mallet-headed swords and killed the enemy at once. There were no enemy left. The Royal forces were overjoyed and turned their faces to the heavens and laughed. Thus they sang:

Now at last!
Now at last!
Those fools, oh,
Would they even *now*,
  My boys,
Would they even *now*,
  My boys?

31 Tsuchihashi Yutaka and Konishi Jin'ichi, eds., *Kodai kayōshū*, NKBT, 3.128.

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It is because of this that the Kumebe nowadays give a great laugh after singing.

The Kuzu were another group known for their songs as well as for customs regarded as quaint by the Yamato court. Living in a remote mountain area of the Kii peninsula, they came annually to court to present offerings of their native products. The presentation was accompanied by a performance similar to that of the Kumebe (*Nihon shoki* 39):

In the winter of the nineteenth year, in the tenth month, on the first day . . . the king [Ōjin] went to the palace at Yoshino. At this time the Kuzu came to court. They presented thick saké, singing:

In the white-oak grove
We fashion a long mortar;
In the long mortar
We have brewed the fine great liquor:
See how good it is –
Come, partake, down it with joy,
Our father.

After they had finished singing, they beat on their mouths, threw back their heads, and laughed. Thus when nowadays on the day the Kuzu present their local products, they finish singing, beat on their mouths, throw back their heads, and laugh, it would seem they are following an ancient custom.

Several of the early songs from the chronicles are attributed to still another group, the *ama* or "seafolk," people who made their living from the sea, by fishing, diving, gathering seaweed, and making salt. Their songs, among the longest and most impressive, are narrative in nature and include variations of the customary formula:

The bottom swimmers,
The seafolk couriers,
Have told the story:
The words of the story
Are these words.

Some of the long narrative songs contain, in their very wording, evidence of how they were acted out. Thus when the kami Eight Thousand Spears grows tired of his wife and is about to leave her, he boastfully enacts a series of scenes in which he dresses himself in various finery (*Kojiki* 4):

Dressed and about to leave, he stood, with one hand on his horse's saddle and one foot in the stirrup, and sang:

Jet-berry black
Is the raiment that I take

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To adorn myself
In my full array;
Bird of the offing
Peering down at its breast,
Flapping its wings:
These clothes do not become me –
I cast them away,
Waves that draw down the shore.

This pattern is repeated with "kingfisher-green raiment," until finally the kami is satisfied with garments "indigo . . . pounded dye plant juice–stained." The song is rich in possibilities for mime. So too is a banquet song (*Kojiki* 42) attributed to King Ōjin in which a crab has a dialogue with a man. The crab's actions – "scuttling sideways . . . diving and gasping" – are vividly described. Highly suggestive of dance movements are these words of a song: "The Kuzu of Yoshino, seeing the sword Ōsazaki no Mikoto was wearing, sang (*Kojiki* 47):

Child of the sun
From Homuta,
Ōsazaki,
Ōsazaki,
The sword you wear
Strung from the hilt,
Swinging at the tip:
Swaying underbrush
In the bare-stemmed winter wood –
Saya! Saya!"

Specific references to dance as a command performance are found in passages such as the following (*Kojiki* 96):

Once when King Yūryaku went to Yoshino Palace there was a maiden beside the Yoshino River, and her figure was lovely. And so he wed this maiden and returned to the palace. Later when he visited Yoshino again he stopped at the place where he had met the maiden, set up a great royal camp-chair, seated himself . . . and had the young lady dance while he played on the zither. And because the lady danced well, he composed a song:

To the hand of a kami
Seated on a camp-chair
Playing the zither
She dances, this woman – oh that
This were the eternal land!

Elsewhere we see guests at a party rising one by one to dance around a fire at night:

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When Yamabe no Muraji Odate was appointed governor of Harima Province, he arrived at the new residence of a commoner of that province, Shijimu by name, and gave a feast. When the feast was in full swing and the liquor was flowing freely, each guest danced in order of precedence. Now, there were two boys to tend the fire, seated by the hearth. When these boys were urged to dance, one of them said, "You, younger brother, dance first." They thus deferred to each other, and the people there assembled laughed.[32]

The songfest, *utagaki* or *kagai*, provided an occasion for singing and dancing that was part ritual, part revel, and part performance. Unmarried young men and women met and exchanged challenges in song, with sexual pairing the object. Several passages in the chronicles and the *Man'yōshū* refer to this custom either directly or obliquely. A poem by Takahashi no Mushimaro in the *Man'yōshū* (9.1759) suggests that the sexual license he observed in the annual rites at Mt. Tsukuha in Hitachi Province be extended to married couples as well:

To where eagles dwell
On the mountain of Tsukuha,
Up to the haven,
The haven of Mohaki,
Urging each other
With shouts, the youths and the maidens
Thronging together,
Go to match songs in the song match.
Because with others' wives
I shall be keeping company,
So with my own wife
Let others banter as they will.
The kami that keep
This mountain from of old
Have never interposed
Their ban against these usages.
This one day alone,
Sweetling, do not look at me,
Do not question what I do.

The *utagaki* as a theater of conflict between rivals in love is presented in a passage from the *Kojiki:*

The progenitor of the Omi of Heguri, Shibi by name, stood up at a songfest and took the hand of the fair maid whom Wake no Mikoto was going to wed. This maiden was the daughter of the Obito of Uda, and her name was Ōuo [great fish]. And so Wake no Mikoto also stood up at the songfest.[33]

32 Ibid., p 104. 33 Ibid., p. 105.

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The rivals insult each other in song, building to a climax complete with taunting plays on the interloper's name (*Kojiki* 110–11):

And so Shibi no Omi, more and more enraged, sang:

My great lord
My prince's brushwood fence,
With eight-knot fastening
You may fasten it round about –
It will cut, that brushwood fence,
It will burn, that brushwood fence.

Oh the great fish,
Tuna-spearing fisherman –
If she gets away
How you'll hanker after her,
Tuna-spearing tunaman.

Thus singing, they contended until dawn and then withdrew and went their separate ways.

Utagaki songs undoubtedly were adapted to other uses by the compilers of the chronicles, given the contextual readings in the love dramas in which those works abound. Plausibly among these are the songs placed in the mouth of Prince Kinashi no Karu, the son of King Ingyō who lusted for his sister Karu no Ōiratsume (*Kojiki* 79, 80, 84):

Hail comes pelting down
On the leaves of bamboo grass
With might and main
Once I've taken her to bed
Let her go where she wants.

That beauty so fine,
If I can bed her, just bed her,
Like sickled rushes
Let the tangle tangle then,
If I can bed her, just bed her.

Sky-flying
Karu maiden,
Softly, softly so
Come to me and sleep and go,
You Karu maidens.

The existence of musical instruments to accompany songs and dances is attested to in the chronicles in such a passage as that already cited in which King Yūryaku plays on the zither. This "horizontal plucked chordophone,"[34] known as a *koto* in Japanese and called a

34 William P. Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1959), p. 165.

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ch'in in China, existed in various forms throughout east Asia. A stringed instrument of the *koto* type dating from Yayoi times has been discovered at the Toro archaeological site in Shizuoka. This early example of the *yamatogoto* or native Japanese zither apparently had six strings. An eight-stringed zither is referred to in a *Kojiki* song (no. 105). Five-stringed varieties are represented in early *haniwa* excavated at Maebashi in Gumma Prefecture. One of these shows the player holding the instrument across his lap, plucking the strings. The Chinese variety had seven strings. A much larger zither, called a *cheng* (*sō* in Japanese), had thirteen strings. Both Chinese zithers were introduced into Japan with the influx of continental music in the seventh century or earlier.

It is thought that the *koto* in ancient Japan had a significance beyond entertainment or aesthetic pleasure. The account in the *Kojiki* of the death of King Chūai suggests that the instrument was used to induce a state of divine possession. Chūai, the husband of Queen Jingū, who is famous in the tendentious accounts in the Japanese chronicles for her conquest of the Korean kingdom of Silla in the fourth century, was playing the *koto* when a divine voice commanded Chūai to cross the sea on a mission of conquest. He scoffed at the command and was cursed to death on the spot for his impiety. The narrative makes clear that the queen is possessed by a kami, which speaks through her mouth, and that the *koto* is played to achieve this effect. The king accuses the voice of belonging to a "lying kami," pushes away the zither, and stops playing. The curse immediately follows: "Go down one road." A minister of court desperately urges the king to resume playing, and he does so, though only reluctantly. But it is too late. The playing stops. Torches are brought, and it is seen that the king is dead.[35] It is clear from this account that the rite of inducing possession was conducted in the dark. Other evidence of the use of the *koto* in shamanistic spirit possession is found in the pillow word *kotogami ni* in Song 92 from the *Nihon shoki:*

> To the *koto*-head
> Comes, abides Kagehime . . .

The word *kage* in Princess Kage's name is thought to refer to the "shadow" of a kami or spirit that is drawn to the plucking of the strings. The following anonymous poem from the *Man'yōshū* seems to refer to something similar (MYS 7.1129, "On a Japanese zither"):

35 *Kojiki*, vol. 2, NKBT, 1.229.

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Taking the zither,
Before all else a sigh escapes –
Can it really be
That deep down in the zither's pipe
My wife has hidden herself?

The poem suggests that not only the kami but also the spirits of dead or absent loved ones could be called forth by this instrument.

The *koto* appears elsewhere in early Japanese myth and fiction in a different formulation. In the *Kojiki*, in the second passage on descent to the underworld, the hero Ōnamuchi no Kami steals the *ama no norigoto* (heavenly speaking zither) from Susa no O, now the ruler of Ne no Katasukuni (another name for Yomi no Kuni), the Japanese Hades. As the hero flees, the zither strikes against a timber, and the resulting sound causes the earth to shake.[36] The *Utsuho monogatari*, a major work of Heian literature, later used the same motif of the zither of divine efficacy as the central unifying theme of its narrative. There, too, the playing of such an instrument causes earthquakes, wind, hail, snow, movements of stars and moon, and the appearance of supernatural beings.[37] The references in the *Kojiki* and *Man'yōshū* are to the *yamatogoto* or *wagon*, the native Japanese version of the instrument, whereas those in the *Utsuho monogatari* are to the Chinese *ch'in*. That there was a special mystique attached to this instrument in China as well as in Japan is suggested by the *Ch'in fu* (Rhyme-prose on the zither) by Chi Shu-yeh (223–62), one of the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove." This long evocation of the excellence of the instrument, in typically florid *fu* style, contains a version of a giant tree legend that is echoed in both the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kojiki*. The Chinese poem tells of a paulownia tree that grows on a remote mountaintop, stretching up to the North Star, drawing sustenance from the light of the sun and moon, lush, shedding blossoms in the sky, plunging its shadow into the gulf in the evening, bathing its trunk in the rising sun in the morning, standing for a thousand years. An offshoot of this tree is cut down and made into a zither, whose excellent qualities are then explained in detail.[38] This work underlies the prose texts and accompanying *waka* exchanged between Ōtomo no Tabito and Fujiwara no Fusasaki (682–738) in *Man'yōshū* 5.810–12. The first composition is sent by Tabito to Fusasaki with the gift of a *yamatogoto* and takes the form of a fantasy in

36 *Kojiki*, vol. 1, NKBT, 1.105.
37 Kōno Tama, ed., *Utsuho monogatari*, vol. 1, NKBT, 85.379–80.
38 Kokumin bunko kankōkai, ed., *Monzen*, vol. 1, in *Kokuyaku kambun taisei: bungakubu*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kokumin kankōkai, 1921), pp. 620–35.

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which the *koto* becomes a maiden and speaks to the author in a dream, recounting how she was once a paulownia tree in the mountains of Tsushima, shone upon by the sun and clothed in the smoky haze. She was chopped down and fashioned into a zither and now begs only that she may have a cultivated master to play on her strings. The prose piece is accompanied by a *waka* in which the maiden asks to be allowed to pillow on the knees of a man who knows music. Tabito replies to her in a *waka* and concludes his experiment in poem-tale fiction with another *kambun* passage. The whole composition is sent off to Fusasaki, who replies in like manner. The fascination with the zither as a "speaking" instrument is clearly implied in this fantasy. A curious passage in the *Kojiki* also parallels the *Ch'in fu* description. In the reign of Nintoku an extraordinarily tall tree, whose shadow "cast by the morning sun reached Awaji Island and in the evening sun crossed Takayasu Mountain," was cut down and its lumber made into the ship *Karano*. Eventually the ship grew old in service, and its hulk was burned for salt. From the leftover timbers was fashioned a *koto* whose notes "resounded over seven leagues."[39]

Also among the instruments of archaic Japan were flutes and drums, rattles, bells, and so forth. The percussion group is supposed to be the most ancient. Bronze ceremonial bells (*dōtaku*) are familiar from late Yayoi excavations, and bell rattles (*suzu, nuride*) are referred to in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as early as the fifth century. A *haniwa* from the same site in Gumma Prefecture as that in which the *koto* player was discovered is modeled into the shape of a drummer striking a jar-shaped hip drum with a stick. This jar-shaped drum is different in configuration from the *tsuzumi* of the later musical tradition, in which the drum head projects beyond and is laced over a narrower, sometimes hourglass-shaped, core. (The Shōsōin preserves such a core in T'ang three-color glazed ceramic ware.) The *haniwa* drum may represent the sort of drum referred to in a *Kojiki* drinking song (no. 40):

He who brewed
This fine liquor – was it because
He took his drum
And standing it up like a mortar,
Singing while he brewed,
Did the brewing of the beer,
Dancing while he brewed,
Did the brewing of the beer,
That this fine liquor,

39 NKBT, 1.283.

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Fine liquor
Makes me feel so extra good?
Sa! Sa!

This passage from the account of the reign of the fourth-century queen Jingū is the earliest textual reference to a *tsuzumi*. Drums were used in the rituals of war as well as in the celebrations of peace. The longest poems in the *Man'yōshū* (2.199), a lament by Hitomaro on the death of the imperial prince Takechi in 696, mentions a *tsuzumi* in one of the series of extended similies in which the poem describes the climactic battle of the Jinshin war of 672:

The crash of drums
Signaling the soldiers to draw up
Resounded till it seemed
The sound of thunder fell upon men's ears.

The same poem also speaks of a horn called a *kuda:*

The bray of horns
Blown in blasts upon the air
Was like the snarling
Of a tiger when it spots its foe,
And the enemy
In all his multitude was seized with fear.

The word *kuda* is written with characters meaning "small horn," and the instrument was originally in fact made of animal horn, though later of bamboo. There were also "large horns" or *hara no fue*. *Fue* is the general term for a wind instrument, and an alternative reading of this above passage has *fue* instead of *kuda*. The six-holed *kagurabue* or kagura flute used in Shinto religious ceremonies is thought to date from the Burial Mound period.

To the ancient songs and dances, both sacred and secular, performed to the accompaniment of strings, flutes, and percussion instruments, was added an influx of music from the continent during the Asuka–Nara period. The arrival of musicians from the continent in Japan began much earlier, with the *Nihon shoki* recording the attendance of eighty musicians from Silla at the funeral ceremonies of King Ingyō in 453. These eighty musicians are said to have brought stringed instruments and to have taken part in the mourning ceremonies, singing, wailing, and dancing.[40] A century later the same chronicle mentions the inclusion of musicians among the learned men of Paekche

40 Ingyō 42/1, NKBT, 67.448–9. The passage states that the musicians "strung their various instruments." The character for "strung" has also been given the interpretation of "prepared."

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sent in 554 as part of the "visiting professor" system.[41] Although we cannot know precisely the nature of the music they taught, any more than that of the "singing, wailing, and dancing" at Ingyō's funeral, it seems reasonable to suppose that some of the continental music was connected with Confucian ritual, as Chinese learning was the principal subject of instruction.

The year 612 provides a point of reference for the early history of music and dance in Japan, as it was then that *gigaku* was introduced by Mimashi from Paekche. Mimashi may have been of Chinese origin. In any case, it was understood that he had studied the music that he brought with him in the south Chinese kingdom of Wu. It is recorded that Mimashi set up a school at Sakurai and taught youths to dance.[42] *Gigaku* continued to be performed until the seventeenth century, but it eventually died out and apparently remained confined to the environs of Nara. It never became as widespread as its rival dance form, *bugaku*.

Gigaku was performed by dancers wearing large wooden or dry lacquer masks, of which 171 have been preserved in the Shōsō-in. Many of the remaining masks were worn at the grand dedication ceremony for the Great Buddha statue of the Tōdai-ji in 752. A long procession of costumed performers paraded about the temple precincts as part of the celebration. One aspect of *gigaku* lives on in the lion dances (*shishimai*) that are still performed in Japan. The Shōsō-in has eight *gigaku* lion masks, of which one is particularly well preserved. It has large eyes and snout and movable jaws and tongue. It measures thirty-eight by thirty-seven by thirty-three centimeters and, like other *gigaku* masks, is large enough to fit over the performer's head. Made of paulownia wood, it was originally brightly colored in various shades of red.

A more naturalistically rendered horse's head is also among the remaining *gigaku* masks. Carved from one piece of paulownia wood, it was gilded with gold leaf and decorated with patterns drawn in black ink. The piece measures 31.5 by 11.5 centimeters and has great presence with its bold eyes and flaring nostrils. Originally it had a mane and was provided with reins. Little is known about the use to which this object was put in the now-extinct art form that utilized it, but it remains a striking piece of Nara sculpture.

That other of the masks were made in Japan is evident from the names and dates inscribed on them. Six or seven are ascribed to an Ōta

41 Kimmei 15/2, NKBT, 68.109. 42 Suiko 20 (612), KNBT, 68.198–9.

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Wamaro. One of these is a mask of Gokō, the duke of Wu, a principal role in the ancient dance-drama. The most prominent feature of this mask is a long, pointed nose, which combines with close-set eyes and red, smiling lips to create a lively but grotesque effect. This mask measures 27.3 by 23 centimeters, is made of paulownia wood, and was painted with verdigris (*rokushō*) over white lead (*gofun*). The association with the state of Wu in southern China is traditional, and *gigaku* is sometimes referred to as "the music of Wu" (*Kuregaku* or *Gogaku*), but Persian or Central Asian elements are suggested by the physiognomy of a mask such as this.

The mask known as the "woman of Wu" (*Kureotome* or *Gojo*), however, is of a distinctly oriental cast. Measuring 34.5 by 23.5 centimeters, it is one of the five masks attributed to Master Kiei, who is known to have been active at the time of the dedication of the Great Buddha statue of the Tōdai-ji in 752. It is probable that this mask was produced for that occasion. The face is handsomely carved in the style of the T'ang beauty, with dark eyebrows reminiscent of the Kichijōten at the Yakushi-ji; narrow, well-defined eyes under a delicately rendered epicanthic fold; a finely chiseled nose and rosebud mouth, on the latter of which the red coloring remains; and a rounded chin harmonizing the overall full but not plump proportions. Small ears are partially hidden under the black lacquer hairdo that defines the outline of the face and is crowned by twin topknots with trailing tufts. The olive-greenish cast of the complexion is similar to that of the male mask, but the absence of grotesque elements results in a very different effect. Here too the material is paulownia, and the mask can justly be ranked with the fine products of Nara woodcarving. The scene in which the character wearing this mask was wooed by the barbarian Konron apparently provided one of the high points in a *gigaku* performance, and it has been suggested that its risqué nature led to disfavor for *gigaku* as a court or temple entertainment.

Another of the standard roles was that of the "drunken barbarian king," and a mask representing this personage has been preserved. Apparently this character and his followers came out at the finale of a performance. The king wears a Phrygian cap with floral designs in verdigris, red, purple, white, and gold leaf. Deep-set eyes peer out from under knitted brows, and a pendulous nose protrudes from between prominent cheekbones. The thick lips are drawn up in a smile half-fierce and half-libidinous. A beard along the jawbone and a thin mustache, glued on with lacquer but now largely fallen out, completed this caricature of a "Western" barbarian. The paulownia wood has

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been painted red, no doubt to indicate the flush of wine. There is a rhythmical force to the carving that goes beyond mere grotesquerie. The mask measures 37.7 by 22.5 centimeters.

One of the most striking *gigaku* masks is made not of wood but of dry lacquer. A creation of Shōri no Uonari, it depicts one of the eight equally drunken followers of the drunken king. Measuring 26.1 by 22.3 centimeters, the physiognomy of this mask with its almost equilateral dimensions captures with demonic force the spirit of intoxication in a smooth-cheeked youth. The surface of the dry lacquer has been painted with a bright, yellowish red, against which the eyebrows, eyes, and mouth stand out in black. Hair was originally pasted on the crown of the head and was extended downward in a still-remaining indication of sparse, uneven bangs rendered in black ink along the forehead. The eyebrows are bold, composed of numerous fine ink lines along the fully modeled brow. They swirl upward with lively rhythmic force, and beneath them the almond-shaped eyes are also slanted sharply upward. The mouth is rendered in a matching bow-shaped grimace, and the planes of the broad face – its width is emphasized by the large, thick ears – rise to high, prominent cheekbones. The black at the nostril openings of the squat nose with its slightly pendulous tip provides the final counterpoint to the red surface of this powerfully modeled expression of dionysian mischief. One of the thirty-six dry lacquer masks in the collection, this item is considered one of Uonari's outstanding creations. It obviously takes full advantage of the plasticity of its medium. Comparison with similar dated masks suggests that it was made for the Eye-opening Ceremony of 752.

Little can now be said about *gigaku* music or the manner in which its dances were performed, but they must have provided a colorful spectacle in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Nara culture. *Gigaku* was taught at Buddhist temples, being brought under the sponsorship of the Tachibana-dera, Uzumasa-dera, and Shitennō-ji soon after its introduction. The association of the foreign musical and dance form with the foreign religion is no doubt relevant to the role that Buddhism played as a cultural force in the Asuka–Nara period. Music and dance as entertainment and spectacle remained associated with temples and gave rise to the noh drama in medieval times. Music was also an essential part of the services themselves: as rituals of comfort for the souls of the deceased, as a way to create an atmosphere of reverence and mystery, and as an earthly enactment of the divine music depicted in Buddhist art. *Shōmyō*, a liturgical Buddhist chant, was introduced in 736 and was influential in the development of Japanese musical styles.

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That the importation of musical forms was part of the general influx of continental culture during the seventh and eighth centuries is indicated by other early references, such as to the introduction of *Toragaku* (Tora may refer to a state in present Burma; another theory holds that it refers to Cheju Island off the south coast of Korea), a form of unknown origin, in 661. *Toragaku* was being included in court concerts as late as 763 but had died out by the ninth century. Of more lasting importance was *gagaku*, being performed at court by 702. *Gagaku* (elegant music) became the designation of the standard varieties of court music as they were developed and survived through the centuries to modern times. Like *gigaku* it accompanied performances of masked dancers (*bugaku*), but it developed as a purely instrumental ensemble art (*kangen*) as well. Although *gagaku* means "elegant music" and has remained associated with the court aristocracy, its origins are in the popular music of China during the T'ang dynasty. T'ang music itself was strongly influenced by central Asian traditions and instruments, so that the "classical" court music of Japan is, in its origins, a composite of many musical cultures. The visual impact of central Asian music is still vividly present at Buddhist sites in Sinkiang and western China. Cave temples such as those at Kizil north of Kucha in the T'ien Shan and at Tunhuang in Kansu preserve wall paintings of paradise scenes in which heavenly musicians perform on four and five-stringed *p'i-p'a*, zithers, *yüan-hsien*, hand-held harps, panpipes, transverse and vertical flutes, and various percussion instruments. Dancers sway, swirl, spin, and cavort, and *apsaras* fly through the air, trailing scarves and strumming on *p'i-p'a*. These scenes are glorifications of the actual musical culture of the Western Regions, a culture that revolutionized T'ang music, whose own tradition had been soberly Confucian. The oasis culture of central Asia was in fact the fountainhead of much of the subsequent music of east Asia. Its distant descendants are the vigorous dance music of present-day Sinkiang and the sedate sonorities of Japanese *gagaku* and related forms preserved in Korea. Certain characteristics of *gagaku* style, however, such as the importance of time units marked off by the scheduled entrance of stereotyped passages in the strings, suggest a connection even with southeast Asian music.

One significant difference between present-day *gagaku* and the music heard at the Nara court lies in the richer variety of instrumentation then available. In addition to the double-reed flute known as the *hichiriki*, the mouth organ (*shō*), transverse flutes, the thirteen-stringed *koto*, the four stringed *biwa*, the small barrel drum (*kakko*),

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the bronze gong (*shōko* or *daishōko*), the hanging drum (*tsuridaiko*), and the large frame drum (*dadaiko*) in the present *gagaku* ensemble, there were a number of no-longer used wind, string, and percussion instruments, some capable of playing in a lower register than is now characteristic of this high-pitched musical art.

Both the *hichiriki*, a short double-reed flute producing an astonishing volume of high-pitched sound, and the mouth organ existed in larger versions in the Nara *gagaku* orchestra as well as in the forms known today, and these larger instruments played an octave or more lower than the types now in use. An ancient harp known as the *kugo* also produced pleasingly dulcet notes. The ancient *biwa* (Ch: *p'i-p'a*), a member of the lute family of Persian origins, spread through central Asia and China, reaching Japan as part of the *gagaku* orchestra, and has undergone various subsequent modifications during its long history in Japanese music. One highly ornate example preserved in the Shōsō-in is the five-stringed variety orginating in India. This instrument, of which the Shōsō-in has the sole surviving example, has a straight rather than a bent neck, and a somewhat narrower sound box than that of the four-stringed type.

Also among the Nara instruments was the four-stringed *genkan* (Ch: *yüan-hsien*, named after one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove) with its long neck and circular sound box.[43] The *genkan*, like the *biwa*, belongs to the lute family and is widely distributed in East Asia. Of the *kugo*, a vertical harp of Sassanian origins, only a fragment remains in the Shōsō-in collection, though it, like the other ancient instruments described here, has recently been reconstructed and played in ensemble.[44] Its twenty-three strings were attached diagonally between a vertical upright and a projecting horizontal arm. The instrument was placed between the legs of a seated player, supported on one shoulder, and played with both hands on opposite sides in the manner of the widely distributed varieties of harp to which it is related in Europe, Africa, and elsewhere. The stringed instruments also included the seven-stringed Chinese *ch'in* and the *shiragigoto* from the Korean state of Silla, both being types of zither. All stringed instruments were played by plucking.

43 The so-called Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove were a troupe of aesthetes who withdrew from the troubles afflicting China in the third century into the consolations of music, drink, and philosophical speculation. Yüan Hsien was famous as a musician and maker of musical instruments. He is reported to have invented the instrument named after him.

44 Such a recital took place at the National Bunraku Theater in Osaka on February 15, 1986. Much valuable information on the music and instruments is available in the concert program, "Reigaku: Kodai gakki no fukugen to ensō."

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Among the wind instruments, the mouth organ or *shō* (Ch: *sheng*) has remained important to the *gagaku* orchestra. This visually striking instrument consists of a bowl-shaped mouthpiece attached to seventeen bamboo pipes of varied lengths. The pipes have finger holes, and the instrument is played by selectively covering them while drawing air in and out of the mouth, producing chords of a reedy quality. The larger variety of *shō*, called the *u*, could be up to 92 centimeters in length and produced truly organlike tones an octave lower than those of the *shō*. The mouth organs had their origins in Indochina and, like other continental instruments, reached Japan by way of China.

One of the most interesting and melodious of the ancient wind instruments is the *haishō*, a set of eighteen bamboo panpipes reconstructed from a fragment in the Shōsō-in. This is closely analogous to the instrument known in ancient Greece and widely distributed throughout the world. The player blows into the pipes while moving the instrument back and forth to produce high or lower notes.

The modern *gagaku* transverse flute, the *ryūteki*, like its ancient analogue preserved in the Shōsō-in, is a reedless bamboo cylinder of Indian origin, widely distributed in various forms throughout east Asia.

The Nara orchestra also included the vertical *dōshō*, a larger version of which, the *shakuhachi*, is still extensively played outside the *gagaku* tradition. This reedless end-blown bamboo flute exists in many parts of the world. The ancient Japanese variety used in *gagaku* may be of Indian origin. Unlike the modern *shakuhachi*, it has one of its six finger holes on the underside.

In addition to the percussion instruments of the modern *gagaku* orchestra, the Shōsō-in preserves, as we noted earlier, the hourglass-shaped ceramic core of a drum. This drum was known as the *jiko* (ceramic drum) and was placed horizontally on a drum stand and played with sticks on its hide-covered ends. The extremely ancient Chinese bell rack was also part of Nara *gagaku*. Sixteen metal bells of graduated sizes were suspended in two tiers and struck with a hard instrument to produce pure and resonant chimes tones. This musical device is known as the *henshō* (Ch: *pien-chung*). A similar arrangement, known variously as the *hōkyō* (Ch: *fang-hsiang*) or *hōkei* (Ch: *fang-ch'ing*), used suspended rectangular metal pieces instead of bells. The notes produced when struck are sharp and short.

The continental music played at the Nara court was part of an international idiom, maintained by frequent contacts with China. Many aspects dropped out as the art became isolated from its countries

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of origin in the Heian period and then fossilized with the later decline of imperial sponsorship. In its eighth-century heyday, *gagaku* must have provided an auditory experience as rich and exotic as the paintings and statuary in Buddhist temples were overpowering in visual terms. In 701 a Gagakuryō (Bureau of court music) was set up on the T'ang model. In the new Chinese-style administration, music was to serve the state in addition to cult and community. In a determined gesture toward self-conscious cultural improvement, the Taihō code of 702 recommended the private study of *koto* music as an act of personal cultivation. In this, too, the beginning of the eighth century marks a major hinge of time, for such a thought would have been far from the archaic cultural matrix in which music served its traditional unexamined social function.

In a broad sense, the term *gagaku* is used to refer to the whole cluster of musical arts sponsored by the court, including those of native origin such as *kagura* and *azuma-asobi*. But in the strict sense, *gagaku* refers to the group of continental musical forms that reached Japan during the Asuka–Nara period. Those of Chinese and southeast Asian origin are referred to as *Tōgaku* (T'ang music), and those stemming from Korea and northeast Asia are referred to as *Komagaku* (Korean music). These categories are also known respectively as "music of the left" and "music of the right." These musics were based on a modal structure in which there were two types, called *ryo* and *ritsu*. Each of these divisions subsumes three of the six twelve-tone Chinese scales that came into Japan with *gagaku* itself. The ordering of tones within the scale determined the mode based on it and underwent considerable modification in Japan during the Heian period.

In present-day *gagaku* the modal complexity of the different categories of music varies. *Kagura* is the simplest, with one modal structure, whereas *Komagaku* uses three modes, and *Tōgaku*, five. The situation in the Nara period is difficult to assess because of the lack of surviving musical notation. Presumably the structural symmetry that is such a prominent feature of *gagaku* as it exists today also characterized it then. The symmetry takes the form of a fourfold repetition of dance movement in *bugaku*. The *bugaku* performance is oriented to the four directions, not to a stage "front." It is very likely that the present pace of performance, as in noh drama, is considerably slower than was the case when the art was a living part of the cultural scene of its day. Nevertheless, *gagaku* has no doubt always been characterized by a sense of deliberate majesty, with large and colorful dance costumes, along with hand-held properties and masks, exploited to the full for a

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complementary visual effect in the dance. As in *gigaku,* the stories enacted in the dance are of exotic continental origin. They are classified as "civil dances" (*bun no mai*), "military dances" (*bu no mai*), "running dances" (*hashirimai*), and "child dances" (*dōbu*), as well as dances of the left or right. The performance of *gagaku* music and dance was taken up by the aristocracy as private entertainment, and Heian works such as *The Tale of Genji* are replete with colorful descriptions. It is not known to what extent this practice of private performance existed in pre-Heian times.

An official entertainment participated in by the men and women of the Nara court was a form of group dance known as *tōka.* Introduced from China in 693, its Japanese version incorporated elements of the native *utagaki,* the rustic song-matches that now, like much else in the urban atmosphere of the Nara period, became the object of cultural curiosity and pastoral condescension. The customs of the countryside were suddenly perceived as different from those of the city and ripe for aristocratic patronage or experiment. Performances of *tōka* were held during the first month as part of the New Year ceremonials and continued to be popular from Tempyō to early Heian times. Also during this period the court was entertained by performances of *sangaku,* theatricals of Chinese origin that included acrobatics and juggling. *Sangaku* was excluded from court patronage in 782, perhaps because of the earthy nature of some of its skits, and its performers led a wandering existence until they attached themselves to Buddhist temples. *Sangaku* is the remote ancestor of *sarugaku* and, through it, of the noh drama.

By the time of the Eye-opening Ceremony at the Tōdai-ji in 752, musical life at the Nara court was a complex of native and imported forms. Among the former were *kagura, saibara, azuma-asobi, Kuzuuta, Kumeuta, ōuta,* and *tatebushi.* Alongside these were the music and dance from abroad – *gigaku, sangaku, Tōgaku, Komagaku, shōmyō,* and such presumably exotic but now obscure musical forms as *Rin'yūgaku, Toragaku,* and *Bokkaigaku.* The Gagakuryō was in charge of them all. The imported forms were eventually either consolidated under the aegis of *gagaku,* or left the court for a wandering existence (*sangaku*), or died out (*gigaku*). The native forms entered a dual existence, as village shrine music (*sato-kagura*) became distinguished from the official *mikagura* of court or as folksongs like *saibara* and *azuma-asobi* were formalized and solemnized as part of *gagaku* in the broad sense. This subsuming of popular culture into high culture is one of the most persistent motifs of Japanese history. It was already well under way in the Nara period, partially owing to the massive infusions

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from advanced civilizations that helped create an instant elite in the capital, and a concomitant penchant for cultural primitivism that has persisted in one guise or another to our own day. The Kuzu might come to court and sing their quaint songs, but by the eighth century, scholars and professional musicians had begun to understand that such local products were of essentially anthropological interest.

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CHAPTER 10

THE EARLY EVOLUTION OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Japan's earliest extant historical accounts were not written until the first decades of the eighth century A.D., but people living on the Japanese islands were surely conscious, long before that, of change in the world around them, especially of the regular rising and setting of the sun and of the inevitable approach of death in the lives of plants, animals, and human beings. Archaeological investigations suggest that even before the introduction of wet-rice agriculture around 200 B.C., hunters and nut gatherers were making a wide range of adjustments to cold and hot seasons of the year, as well as to light and dark segments of the day. Then with the emergence of agricultural life in the later Yayoi period, the realization that rice grows only in one part of the year certainly deepened their awareness of the seasonal cycle, as we know from the early appearance of festivals held at the start and end of the growing season.[1]

But by the following Burial Mound period, roughly from A.D. 250 to 600, leaders of emerging states seem gradually to have become preoccupied with a fundamentally different kind of temporal progression: the replacement of one hereditary ruler by the next. They were henceforth concerned not only with the cyclical activity of natural phenomona but also with a succession of reigns moving in a linear fashion from distant points in the past to an indeterminate future.[2] Tracing the pre-800 stages in the rise of this new type of historical consciousness is compli-

1 The structure and development of historical consciousness in ancient Japan has been studied by Tanaka Gen, *Kodai Nihonjin no jikan ishiki: sono kōzō to tenkai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1975); Maruyama Masao, "Rekishi ishiki no kosō," *Rekishi shisō shū*, vol. 6 of *Nihon no shisō* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1972), pp. 3–46; Ishida Takeshi, "Gukanshō to Jinnō shōtō-ki no rekishi shisō," *Rekishi shisō shū*, pp. 47–152; Ishida Ichirō, "Shinwa to rekishi: shisei ritsuryō kokka to kasei rikken kokka no rinen," *Nihon bunka kenkyū* vol. 8 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1960); Ishida Ichirō, "Kokka keisei jidai no rekishi shisō," in Nihon shisōshi kenkyūkai, ed., *Nihon ni okeru rekishi shisō no tenkai* (Sendai: Nihon shisōhi kenkyūkai, 1965), pp. 2–30; Shibata Minoru, "Heian jidai zenki no rekishi shisō," in *Nihon ni okeru rekishi shisō*, pp. 55–73; Nishio Yōtarō, "Heian jidai kōki no rekishi shisō," *Nihon ni okeru rekishi shisō*, pp. 75–99; and Yuasa Yasuo, *Kodaijin no seishin sekai* (Kyoto: Minerubua shobō, 1980).

2 Tanaka Gen sees the emergence of a linear type of historical consciousness during the Burial Mound period after the emergence of interest in genealogy; see *Kodai Nihonjin*, pp. 134–47.

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cated by a paucity of Japanese chronicles and documents written during that early period, but we now have enough historical, archaeological, and ethnological evidence to be quite certain that the three characteristics of historical expression found in early accounts of Japan's past, and discussed in this chapter, were grounded in beliefs of "prehistorical" times.

These three characteristics are: *linealism* (arising from an early and lasting belief in the importance of sacred-ruler descent), *vitalism* (stemming from a constant preoccupation with the origins and enrichment of physical life), and *optimism* (flowing from convictions that the immediate future will be better than the present or the past). While affecting and being affected by one another, these characteristics were in constant tension with polar opposites: That is, a belief in Japan's sacred imperial line was in conflict with imported Chinese ideas of a cyclical rise and fall of dynasties; Shinto preoccupation with the life-creating power of the kami (native deities) always stood against the Confucian principle that events in human history are affected by virtuous or nonvirtuous behavior; and historical assumptions of future improvement were seriously challenged by Buddhist doctrines of inevitable deterioration over time and by the Confucian belief in the "golden age of antiquity." But a study of Japanese historical expression in these pre-800 years indicates that beliefs, ideas, and assumptions on the Japanese side of the polarity account for uniqueness in the Japanese historical outlook and help us identify and understand early stages in the evolution of historical consciousness.

LINEALISM

The first extant chronicles (the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*) were compiled at the beginning of the Nara period, at a time when Japan's leaders had a special interest in the political techniques and cultural achievements of imperial China. The compilers of these early chronicles were familiar with Chinese historical works, realizing full well that they had been shaped by the belief that every dynasty would eventually fall, just as every form of life is destined to die. And yet Japan's first chronicles were motivated instead by the desire to affirm the sanctity and continuity of Japan's sacred line of imperial descent. Every occupant of the throne was honored as a direct descendant of the first emperor, whose father was in turn honored as the direct descendant of the Sun Goddess.

Japanese historians of pre–World War II years tended to assume

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that the official compilers of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* had faithfully recorded the origins and ancestry of Japanese emperors, thereby leaving a delineation of rulership that was too sacred for criticism or objective study. But the postwar removal of restraints against the free expression of thought has enabled scholars to subject ancient sources to critical analysis. At first they tended to think of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* mainly as collections of myths,[3] but the discovery of new historical and archaeological evidence and further research in other disciplines have added support to the thesis that the early chroniclers were attempting, above all, to strengthen the position of the current emperor by compiling a convincing account of his or her descent on a long line of sacred rulers going back to, and beyond, the imperial house's first ancestral kami. The compilers' motivation was therefore akin to that of the Yamato kings who had built burial mounds (*kofun*) for their deceased predecessors (see Chapter 2). In addition to (or instead of) having these myths recited at funeral services for deceased rulers, chronicle compilers devised a genealogical account of myths and historical events, making the myths more historical and the events more mythical.[4] But the preoccupation with affirmations of sacred descent (linealism) certainly preceded the compilation of chronicles.

Pre-Nara linealism

The origins and early development of linealism seem to have been rooted in the Yayoi period rise of beliefs about relationships between kami and hereditary rulers, which paralleled the appearance of small states ruled by priestly kings and queens. The first concrete evidence of linkage between kami worship and the rule of hereditary kings and queens is found in a section on Japan appearing in the dynastic history of Wei (221 to 265). There we are told that a hereditary ruler of the state of Ito owed allegiance to the larger state of Yamatai governed by Queen Himiko.[5] The report does not say that Himiko was herself a

3 Even before the outbreak of World War II, Tsuda Sōkichi made textual studies that led him to conclude that earlier sections of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* had been fabricated in order to justify imperial rule and to do so by tracing its roots deep into the past. In 1940 he was charged with violating the dignity of the imperial household, and the sale of his books was banned. But after the war a number of scholars took up the work he had started. See Ueda Masasaki, *Kodai saihakken* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1975), pp. 21–35.

4 A thesis developed by Ishida Ichirō in "Kokka keisei jidai no rekishishi shisō," in *Nihon ni okeru rekishi shisō to tenkai*, pp. 19–30.

5 *Hou Han shu* 115: 16b–19a, translated in Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (South Pasadena, Calif.: P. D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), p. 9.

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hereditary ruler, but this is implied in the report that she was succeeded by a male ruler who could not maintain control and who was therefore replaced by a thirteen-year-old female relative. The same account makes the following comment about what transpired at the time of Himiko's death: "When [Himiko] passed away, a great mound was raised, more than a hundred paces in diameter. Over a hundred male and female attendants followed her in the grave."[6] Although we do not have written Japanese sources for this period, and the Chinese accounts do not provide information about the rites performed by or for Himiko, it seems logical to deduce that the queen and those who followed her were performing rites by which their positions on one particular line of descent were sanctified by divine beings, possibly already designated as kami.

This linkage between hereditary rulers and religious rites is more sharply defined by archaeological evidence for the following Yamato period (ca. 250 to 589). Throughout those centuries, a huge mound was built for each successive king or queen. The first written evidence (recorded in chronicles compiled at the beginning of the eighth century), together with archaeological data assembled from investigations of thousands of Yamato period burial mounds, indicates that most rulers used much of their resources for building impressive mounds for the burial of their immediate predecessors. The early chronicles provide considerable detail about the location of particular mounds of the Yamato period and even make comments about the burial ceremonies held at or near mounds. But they do not explain why a ruler was willing to devote such a large share of his or her resources to mound building. Archaeological investigations at numerous mound sites now permit us to see patterns in the distribution, size, style, and content of these mounds; and this information, coupled with reports found in later chronicles, make us quite certain where particular kings were buried. But the question of motivation for mound building is still a subject of debate and disagreement. Under the influence of the old assumption that "ancestor worship" was already strong in the Burial Mound period, early writers theorized that a mound was a place for the worship of a deceased ruler and that the treasures placed inside (the *fukusōhin*) were offerings to his deified soul. But archaeologists have found no evidence that offerings were ever made at a mound *after* a burial ceremony was completed. Moreover, no ancient shrine for the

6 Amakasu Ken, "Kofun no keisei no gijutsu no hattatsu," in *Genshi oyobi kodai*, vol. 1 of *Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 274–321.

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worship of clan kami has been found *over* a burial mound. Consequently, the theory that a mound was a place for worshiping a deceased ruler seems weak.

A more plausible view is that living rulers consciously or unconsciously built mounds for their deceased predecessors in order to pacify their souls (*chinkon*). The Japanese commonly believed, and many still do, that souls live on after death and might cause trouble for the living if not treated properly. And because a deceased ruler was believed to have had a special relationship to mysterious forces and divine beings, it was undoubtedly thought that his or her soul required special treatment after death. Realizing, too, that anything associated with death – especially the death of a priestly ruler – was a pollution (*tsumi*) that must be avoided, objects belonging to the deceased ruler may have been deposited in the mound in order to remove those death-polluted objects from the presence of the living. Moats and clay figurines (*haniwa*) thus may have been placed around a burial mound in order to keep the soul from straying outside it.

Although a mound was probably built to honor a deceased ruler, pacify his or her soul, and prevent his or her death from contaminating the world of the living, it must also have been valued for the legitimacy and strength it added to the position of the current ruler. No mound builder has left a record of his or her reasons for undertaking such an enterprise, but a new ruler surely welcomed a visible and impressive symbolization of descent from his or her priestly predecessor, making it eminently clear to his or her subjects – and to the subjects of neighboring clans and states – that the present ruler, as the last link in a sacred chain of ruler descent, had inherited all the power and authority possessed by his deceased predecessor.

The *Nihon shoki*'s references to eulogies (*shinobigoto*) held at the time of a ruler's burial suggest that a mound symbolized, above all, the transmission of sacred authority from a deceased ruler to the living successor. We find, for example, the following reference to eulogies offered during funeral services held at Emperor Temmu's mound in 688: "The Crown Prince . . . proceeded to the palace of temporary interment [*mogari no miya*] and lamented the emperor's death. After respects had been paid, the shield dance was performed. Then each clan head came forward and submitted a record of service rendered by his ancestors, pronouncing a eulogy."[7] Another *Nihon shoki* item,

7 *Nihon shoki*, Jitō 2 (688) 11/4, in Sakamoto Tarō, Ienaga Saburō, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds., *Nihon koten bungaku taihei* (hereafter cited as NKBT) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), vol. 68, pp. 492–3. This and the following translations from the *Nihon shoki* were made

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added a few days later, states that "Chitoko . . . eulogized the line of imperial succession from the Sun Goddess."[8] Such references suggest that eulogies were expressions of lineage beliefs that affirmed the existence of extraordinary ties between living and deceased rulers, thereby justifying the use of much time, energy, and wealth for constructing and equipping the mounds.

The ruler-legitimation theory has been strengthened by two pieces of fifth-century evidence: a 478 memorial that was sent by a Japanese king to the Chinese court, and an inscription-bearing sword excavated from a fifth-century mound in eastern Japan. The memorial, quoted in Chinese accounts of the kingdom of Liu Sung (420 to 479), states that the author (a Japanese king) of the memorial had expanded his control over states in various parts of the Japanese islands and had paid homage to the Chinese court generation after generation.[9] The study of other contemporary sources has led scholars to conclude that this memorial was written by King Yūryaku, whose blood-related predecessors had extended their control throughout Japan[10] and whose son Seinei, according to Japanese chronicles, was buried in a mound located in the southern part of the present city of Osaka.[11]

The 115-character inscription on the sword removed from the Inariyama mound adds support to the theory that mound building was meant, above all, to honor the ancestral line of the Yamato kings. Even though several questions about the sword and its inscription have not yet been resolved, it is clear that the inscription (1) begins with a date in the sexagenary cycle equivalent to A.D. 471 (it might be sixty years later); (2) has seven names, beginning with that of a legendary figure mentioned in both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and ending with that of the person presumed to have been the sword's owner; (3) indicates that each of the last six persons on the list is the son of the previously named man; and (4) states that these seven generations of sword-bearing group heads had served such kings as Wakatake generation after generation. Scholars are inclined to agree that Wakatake is another name for the very same Yūryaku who sent the 478 memorial to China, that the sword belonged to a fifth-century head of military group serving the king in eastern Japan, and that when the owner died

by the author, who has used words and phrases in W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D.697* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956).

8 *Nihon shoki*, Jitō 2 (688) 11/11, NKBT 68.493.

9 *Sung shu* 97: 23b–25a, Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 23.

10 Inoue Mitsusada, *Shinwa kara rekishi e*, vol. 1 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1965), pp. 433–8.

11 *Nihon shoki*, Seinei 5/11/9, NKBT 67.508.

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the sword was buried with his body.[12] It can be guessed that a eulogy was offered at the funeral service for him, praising services rendered to Yamato kings – generation after generation – by his particular line of group heads. Thus the Inariyama sword provides strong support for the view that the building of burial mounds in the Yamato period was closely associated with, if not motivated mainly by, the urge of living rulers to honor their ancestral line, thereby reinforcing their authority.

The third stage of pre-Nara linealism (589 to 710) was not associated with mound building but with the construction of Buddhist temples following the introduction and spread of Buddhism in the sixth century. As in the case of Yamato mounds, scholars disagree as to why these rulers began devoting so much of their material and human resources to building exotic and impressive Buddhist temples. Japanese leaders were certainly attracted by the splendor of Buddhist halls, statues, and paraphernalia associated with China's remarkable cultural achievements during the Sui and T'ang dynasties. But the *Nihon shoki*'s references to temple construction, as well as inscriptions carved on Buddhist statues, leave the impression that temples and statues, like burial mounds in earlier days, were meant to enhance the power and prestige of living clan chieftains.

That Buddhist temples were erected for purposes akin to those that resulted in the burial of predecessors in mammoth mounds is corroborated by historical and archaeological evidence concerning the construction of the Hōkō temple (also known as the Asuka-dera) toward the close of the sixth century. A *Nihon shoki* item for the year 586 reports that Soga no Umako (d. 626) vowed to erect a Buddhist temple and a Buddhist pagoda if he were successful in battle.[13] Although this suggests that Umako took the vow mainly to ensure his victory, a *Nihon shoki* entry for 594 on the current fad for temple construction states that officials were beginning to vie with one another in building temples in order to express their "appreciation for blessings [*on*] received from [deceased] rulers [*kimi*] and parents [*oya*]."[14] Apparently, the leaders of all clans, not just the Soga, were attempting to reinforce their prestige and power by building and using Buddhist temples to honor their particular descent line.

A remarkably close connection between the building of mounds and

12 See Tai Kawabata's articles in *Japan Times* after January 1, 1979; and Murayama Shichiro and Roy Miller, "The Inariyama Tumulus Sword Inscription," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 5 (1979): 405–38.

13 *Nihon shoki*, Sushun 2 (586) 7, NKBT 68.164–5.

14 *Nihon shoki*, Suiko 2 (594) 2/1, NKBT 68.174–5.

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the construction of temples is also suggested by archaeological investigations made at the Asuka-dera site, where a sixth-century compound was found to contain Buddhist halls, corridors, and a central pagoda. Knowing that a pagoda was considered a monument to Buddha and that a Buddha bone (*shari*) was customarily placed at its base, archaeologists dug below the remains of the pagoda and found not only what was left of a box for the Buddha relic but also replicas of bronze mirrors, bronze swords, and *magatama*, the very articles most commonly placed in a mound with the corpse of a deceased ruler.[15] The discovery of *fukusōhin*-like treasures in the most sacred place of the Asuka-dera suggests that clan heads had come to honor their ancestral line and to affirm in a new way their position in that line. Historical references to hundreds of Buddhist temples built in Japan during the following century leave little doubt that making Buddhist statues, reading Buddhist sutras, and holding Buddhist memorial services were largely to console and honor the souls of deceased clan heads. Thus Buddhism already stood at the core of what has been loosely called Japanese ancestor worship. The sharp rise in the number of new Buddhist temples – paralleled by a gradual decline in the number of new burial mounds – suggests that the construction of a grand temple, where exotic rites were held before statues of great splendor, was beginning to be thought of as a more impressive way in which to honor a deceased predecessor (and to sanctify and legitimize the control of the current ruler) than was the building of a massive mound.

Nara period linealism

Some time in the seventh century, if not earlier, the central government adopted the Chinese practice of compiling official chronicles. This too was largely motivated by the desire to glorify and sanctify the imperial line of descent and to add legitimacy and authority to the position of the current ruler. The preface to the *Kojiki*, thought to be Japan's earliest extant chronicle, contains an edict, issued in 681, that provides a clear and explicit statement of why Emperor Temmu thought such a chronicle was needed:

> I hear that imperial records [*teiki*] and accounts of origin [*honji*] handed down by various houses have come to differ from the truth and that many falsehoods have been added. If these errors are not corrected now, the meaning of the records and accounts – the warp and woof of the Japanese state and the

15 See Inoue, *Shinwa kara rekishi e*, pp. 201–2.

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foundations of imperial rule – will be lost before many years have passed. Therefore a study of the imperial records for the purpose of selecting out and recording what is true, and an examination of ancient accounts [*kyūji*] for the purpose of rejecting errors and determining truth are ordered so that we may have true records and accounts passed on to later generations.[16]

Historians are inclined to agree that these "imperial records" were essentially genealogies. Ishida Ichirō claims, however, that we have been wrong in assuming that "accounts of origin" (*honji*) were identical with "ancient accounts" (*kyūji*). He points out that the first character of *honji* – read *moto* when used alone – must have meant "origins," as in a 612 *Nihon shoki* entry that reports that a certain Soga had the origins (*moto*) of his clan eulogized.[17] Ishida's interpretation suggests that Emperor Temmu was thinking, when he referred to "the warp and woof of the Japanese state and the foundations of imperial rule," not simply of the value of an accurate genealogy of the imperial line but also of that line's sacred origins. Ishida's interpretation of *honji* and Emperor Temmu's stated reasons for ordering the compilation of a chronicle are consistent with the decision of the *Kojiki*'s and the *Nihon shoki*'s compilers to devote the first chapters of their chronicles to myths tracing the origins of the imperial line back to the earliest kami, thereby making the imperial line an extension of a kami line in which the ancestral kami of the imperial house (the Sun Goddess) was the original kami. Emperor Temmu and his court officials who compiled these chronicles were undoubtedly familiar with the Chinese assumption that a dynasty would thrive and then decay before being replaced by a new one and that this assumption gave dynastic histories their basic character. But the Japanese compilers of official chronicles were not much affected by this Chinese assumption. Instead, they responded to an old Japanese urge to honor just one imperial line by making that line clear (in this new Chinese way) and by writing down ancient myths about its divine origins, thus largely ignoring Chinese ideas about the rise and fall of dynasties.

The Chineseness of the *Nihon shoki* and the five later chronicles of Japan's Six National Histories (*Rikkokushi*) is, however, readily apparent. The *Nihon shoki*, presented to the court in 720, as well as the remaining five of the Six National Histories, were written in Chinese and include numerous quotations from the Chinese Classics.[18] But

16 *Kojiki* 1, NKBT 1.44–47. Translation slightly different from that in Donald L. Philippi, trans., *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), p. 41.

17 Ishida, "Kokka keisei jidai no rekishi shisō," pp. 4–7.

18 Shibata Minoru, "Heian jidai zenki no rekishi shisō" in *Nihon ni okeru rekishi shisō shi no tenkai*, pp. 58–63.

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they do not have the character of a Chinese dynastic history. Professor G. W. Robinson believes that this was because the Japanese did not then have "enough material out of which to fashion a convincing replica of the Chinese dynastic history" and that, later on, it may have been "inertia or, possibly conscious conservatism" that kept them from following China's example.[19] But it seems more likely that the Japanese – or Chinese or Korean immigrants – were constrained by their belief in the sacred origins and continuity of the imperial line. Even though some ruptures appeared in the line, notably with Emperor Keitai in the sixth century, the myth that the line had been created by the Sun Goddess to last forever seems to have had a strong hold on the minds of court aristocrats, making them unreceptive to the Chinese idea that a Mandate of Heaven would ever call for the founding of a new Japanese dynasty.

The strength and utility of the native belief in a sacred line of imperial descent are made especially clear in the *Kojiki*, thought to have been presented to the imperial court in 712. Although the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* may have been compiled at about the same time and by men who had access to the same sources, the Chinese flavor is weaker in the *Kojiki*, and the effect of the native preoccupation with a sacred imperial line is stronger. Because this chronicle was said to have been finished eight years earlier, students of early Japanese history have tended to accept Motoori Norinaga's (1730–1801) thesis that it provides a clear and more accurate picture of Japanese life before the wholesale importation of Chinese ideas and practices because it was compiled first. But Umezawa Isezō concludes that at least one Chinese-style chronicle preceded the *Nihon shoki* and that the compilation of the *Kojiki* resulted, in part at least, from a desire to counteract Chinese concepts of dynastic change that had seeped into earlier Japanese chronicles.[20] Even if we cannot accept Umezawa's thesis, we cannot deny that the *Kojiki* reveals less interest in Chinese dynastic ideas and greater preoccupation with imperial lineage.

The court aristocrats who produced these two early chronicles were nevertheless influenced to some extent by the Chinese idea that a line of succession, like everything else, was subject to a cyclical process of birth, growth, deterioration, and death. This is detected in the *Nihon shoki*'s treatment of the reigns of rulers whose blood ties with predeces-

19 G. W. Robinson, "Early Japanese Chronicles: The Six National Histories," in W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank, eds., *Historians of China and Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 220.

20 Umezawa Isezō, *Kojiki, Nihon shoki* (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1971).

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sors were remote: Ōjin, who occupied the throne around A.D. 400, and Keitai, who ruled Japan more than a century later. Apparently assuming, as the Chinese did, that a new branch of the imperial line becomes necessary when an old one deteriorates, the *Nihon shoki* praises those two kings but criticizes their predecessors.[21] These are only minor notes, however, in an otherwise consistent emphasis on Japan's sacred and single line of imperial descent.

Linealism was nevertheless severely challenged in the middle of the eighth century by rulers who were influenced by Buddhist conceptions of sovereignty. Evidence of this challenge is most clearly seen in the contemporary chronicle (the *Shoku Nihongi*) that covers events at court from 697 to 791. It shows that after the final decade or so of the seventh century, when state-supported temples began to flourish, Japanese sovereigns, like the heads of continental states, valued three particular Buddhist sutras for what they had to say about the power of Buddha to protect the state. One of them, the Benevolent Kings Sutra (Ninnō-kyō), directs this message to secular rulers:

> Great kings, I see that all human kings have obtained this rank because in former ages they served the 500 Buddhas and respectfully made offerings to them and that all holy men and those who obtained the fruit of the Law are reborn in their countries and cause great blessings. But if the felicity of those kings is exhausted and they do not walk in the Law, the holy men go away and violent calamities arise. Great kings, if in future ages the kings of the countries establish the Saddharma and protect the Triratna, I order the crowds of Boddhisattvas and Mahāsattvas of the five quarters to go and protect their countries.[22]

As early as 741 Emperor Shōmu decided, at a time when the country was suffering from the effects of a succession of natural disasters, to implement an earlier plan to build Buddhist temples in every province of the land. He justified his decision in this way:

> In the Sutra it is written that when a king shall cause this Sutra to be read, expounded devoutly, and propagated throughout the realm, the Four Deva Kings shall surely come to protect that country against all calamity, to avert sorrow and pestilence, and to cause the hearts of believers to be filled with joy forever. In view of this . . . it is my wish that the sacred Law of Buddha be

21 *Nihon shoki*, Chūai, Ōjin, Buretsu, and Keitai chapters, NKBT 67.320–9, 67.362–81, 68.8–17, 68.18–47.

22 Ninnō-kyō (Sanskrit: Prajāpāramitā Sūtra), *Taishō* no. 246, vol. 8, translated by M. W. DeVisser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan: Sutras and Ceremonies in Use in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries A.D. and Their History in Later Times* (Leiden: Brill, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 138–9.

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made to flourish for so long as Heaven and Earth shall last and that its protective blessings be bestowed upon the living and the dead forever.[23]

And yet Shōmu's daughter (who succeeded her father as empress in 749 and who was also devoted to Buddhism) seems to have assumed that her legitimacy and authority arose, first and foremost, from her birth in Japan's sacred line of descent from the Sun Goddess. Even though her father Shōmu had proclaimed (when dedicating the great statue of Rushana Buddha at the Tōdai-ji) that he was a servant of the Three Buddhist Treasures, the empress soon issued another edict in which she referred to herself as "a manifest kami" and declared that her imperial position had been inherited from the Sun Goddess.[24]

When this daughter of Shōmu ascended the throne in 764 as Empress Shōtoku, the native belief in the unbroken imperial line was far more severely challenged by Buddhist conceptions of sovereignty. She had not only taken orders as a Buddhist nun but had also become personally associated (possibly as a lover) with a Buddhist priest (Dōkyō), on whom she bestowed high honors and positions. The edict she issued immediately after her second enthronement in 764 does not begin with a traditional repetition of the ancient formula that Japan's sovereign was a manifest kami descended from the Sun Goddess. Instead, it takes up these two difficult questions: Is it right for an empress to place a Buddhist priest (Dōkyō) at the very pinnacle of Japan's bureaucratic structure? And is it right for a Buddhist nun to become the empress of Japan? Her answers reveal a clear awareness of conflict between native and Buddhist conceptions of sovereignty:

It has been represented to us, in view of the master (Dōkyō's) constant attendance on us, that he has the ambition of rising to high office as his ancestors did, and we have been petitioned to dismiss him. But we have observed his conflict and found it immaculate. Out of a desire to transmit and promote Buddha law, he has extended to us his guidance and protection. How can we lightly dismiss such a teacher? Although our head has been shaven and we wear Buddhist robes, we feel obliged to conduct the government of

23 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō 13 (741) 3/24, KT 2.163–4. Portions of the *Shoku Nihongi* have been translated by J. B. Snellen, "Shoku Nihongi (Chronicles of Japan)," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (hereafter cited as TASJ), 2nd series, no 11 (1934): 151–239 and no. 14 (1937): 209–78. Imperial edicts of the *Shoku Nihongi* were studied and partially translated in George B. Sansom, "The Imperial Edicts in the Shoku Nihongi (700–790 A.D.)," TASJ, 2nd series, no.1 (1924): 5–39. Helpful explanatory notes can be found in Saeki Ariyoshi, ed., *Zōho rikkoku shi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1940), vols. 3–4, and the entire *Shoku Nihongi* has been translated into modern Japanese by Naoki Kōjirō, *Shoku Nihongi*, 3 vols. (no. 457 of *Tōyō Bonko*) (Tokyo: Haibonsha, 1986–90).

24 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Shōhō 1 (749) 4, Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Shintei zōho: Kokushi taikei* (hereafter cited as KT) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1959), vol. 2, p. 198; Saeki, *Zōho rikkokushi* 3.357–9.

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the nation. As Buddha declared in the [Bommō] Sutra, "Kings, ye who take up a throne, receive the ordination of the bodhisattvas." These words prove that there can be no objection to [the Japanese] government's being administered by one who has taken holy [Buddhist] orders.[25]

But as deeply engrossed as Empress Shōtoku was with Buddhism and Dōkyō, she never – to my knowledge – explicitly denied the Japanese belief that she was a manifest kami descended from the Sun Goddess. Moreover, in another edict issued shortly after ascending the throne a second time, she spoke of selecting her successor in these terms: "Hear ye a mandate that proclaims that . . . we alone monopolize the Sun Goddess–inherited throne and that although we have not yet selected our successor, we are giving the matter careful consideration and feel that a person with the favor of Heaven will eventually appear."[26]

Empress Shōtoku's basic assumptions concerning the imperial line are disclosed in actions that she took, and did not take, when it was reported in 769 that an oracular message had been received from a famous kami (Hachiman of Usa) stating that Japan would have peace if Dōkyō were placed on the throne. Although Shōtoku was fond of Dōkyō and had appointed him to high posts, she apparently was not pleased to hear that he was being proposed as her successor. Indeed, the *Shoku Nihongi* states that soon afterward, she herself received a message from Hachiman advising her to have the authenticity of the report checked. She dispatched Wake no Kiyomaro (733–99) to Usa with instructions to find out just what Hachiman's wishes were. When Kiyomaro returned to the capital, he brought back quite a different version of the Hachiman oracle:

Ever since the founding of the Yamato state, emperors and empresses have been selected by their predecessors. But no minister has ever become emperor. An emperor or empress must necessarily be selected from those who are in the Sun Goddess's line of descent. A person not selected in accordance with this principle should be summarily rejected.[27]

The *Shoku Nihongi* then adds that after Wake no Kiyomaro made his report, Dōkyō became angry and had Kiyomaro sent into exile. Because Dōkyō continued to hold high offices, some scholars conclude that the Japanese ideal of enthroning only sovereigns born in the Sun Goddess's line was not yet firmly established.[28] But Dōkyō did not

25 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Hōji 8 (764) 9/20, KT 2.306; Saeki, *Zōho rikkoku shi*, 4.92–4.
26 *Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō Hōji 8 (764) 10/14, KT 2.310; Saeki, *Zōho rikkoku shi* 4.100–1.
27 *Shoku Nihongi*, Jingo Keiun 3 (769) 9/25, KT 2.368; Saeki, *Zōho rikkoku shi* 4:195–7.
28 As concluded by Hayakawa Shōhachi in *Ritsuryō kokka*, vol. 4 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1974), p. 341.

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become emperor, and after Shōtoku's death, only members of the imperial line were considered as possible successors. When Prince Shirakabe (a direct descendant of Emperor Tenji) occupied the throne in 770 as Emperor Kōnin, he issued an edict justifying enthronement in terms of (1) his selection by Shōtoku as her successor (apparently a falsified claim, but one that he and his advisers felt had to be made) and (2) his descent from the Sun Goddess.[29] Although the edict has Confucian overtones, no reference is made to Buddhist ideas of sovereignty. In 781 Kōnin was succeeded by his son who occupied the throne as Emperor Kammu. Thus, as the Nara period came to a close, the old Japanese conception of divine imperial descent had emerged unscathed from the authority crisis. And history writing continued to be shaped and colored by the belief that Japan should always be ruled by an unending succession of sovereigns descended from the Sun Goddess.

Belief in Japan's sacred line of imperial descent, lying at the base if linealism, was also expressed in poems written during and before the Nara period. Among the more than 4,500 included in the *Man'yōshū* (the oldest extant anthology which was compiled in the eighth century), many refer directly to the divine origins and the continuous blessings of emperors and empresses, as in the following long poem composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro at the time of Crown Prince Kusakabe's death in 689:

> At the beginning of heaven and earth
> The eight hundred, the thousand myriads of gods [kami],
> Assembled in high council
> On the shining beach of the Heavenly River,
> Consigned the government of the Heavens
> Unto the Goddess Hirume, the Heaven-illuminating One,
> And the government for all time,
> As long as heaven and earth endured,
> Of the Rice-abounding Land of Reed Plains
> Unto her divine offspring,
> Who, parting the eightfold clouds of the sky,
> Made his godly descent upon the earth.
> Our noble Prince, child of the Bright One above,
> Regarding this – the land over which
> The gracious Sovereign reigns as a god.[30]

29 *Shoku Nihongi*, Hōki 1(770)/10, KT 2.383; Saeki, *Zōho rikkoku shi* 4.222–4.

30 The Nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai translation of *The Manyoshu: One Thousand Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 34.

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Post-Nara linealism

Approximately twenty years after the capital was moved from Nara – first to Nagaoka in 787 and then to Heian (now Kyoto) in 794 – a book (the *Kogoshūi*) on past traditions was compiled by the head of the Inbe clan, Inbe no Hironari. His purpose was to support the clan's demands for a position at court equal to that of the great Nakatomi (later Fujiwara) clan. But the book did not make its case in terms of Inbe's landholdings, its military power, its achievements in bureaucratic expertise, or its Chinese learning. Instead, it attempted to show that (1) the ancestral kami of the Inbe clan (Futotama no Mikoto) had joined the ancestral kami of the Nakatomi clan (Koyane no Mikoto) in persuading the Sun Goddess to come from behind the Heavenly Rock Cave in the age of kami; (2) descendants of the Inbe ancestral kami had loyally supported emperors and empresses ever since the Sun Goddess dispatched her grandson to earth to place Japan under the rule of its descendants in the age of man; and (3) the Inbe clan began to lose its standing at court when, during the reign of Emperor Shōmu, the increasingly powerful Nakatomi arbitrarily and selfishly altered the official lists of shrines and kami. After detailing the errors and mistakes, Inbe no Hironari urged Emperor Kammu to restore ancient ceremonies and (by implication) to appoint members of the Inbe clan to positions at court as high as those held by the Nakatomi. The *Kogoshūi,* like the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki,* is therefore a politically motivated record of myth and history focused on the sacred and everlengthening imperial line, but with a difference: Whereas the earlier chronicles were written by court officials to strengthen the position of the current emperor, the *Kogoshūi* was written by a clan head attempting to strengthen his clan's influence at court. The basic point of reference in both cases was the position of the current emperor on a sacred line of descent. Thus linealism was as central to the *Kogoshūi* as it was to the Nara period chronicles.[31]

Historical tales (*rekishi monogatari*) written in the middle of the Heian period, especially in the *Eiga monogatari* (Tales of splendor) and the *Ōkagami* (Great mirror), were referred to as succession tales (*yotsugi no monogatari*), for they were consistently focused on lines of succession.[32] But the emphasis of the historical tales was not simply on

31 Genichi Katō and Hikoshirō Hoshino, trans., *Kogoshūi: Gleanings from Ancient Stories* (London; Curzon Press, 1972), pp. 15–54.

32 These historical tales have been translated in William H. and Helen Craig McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period,* 2 vols.

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the sacred imperial line but also on the subsidiary descent line of the Fujiwara heads. They showed (1) where an individual stood in the Fujiwara line of descent and (2) how he or she had been linked, generation after generation, with the imperial line. Thus the position of every prominent Fujiwara official of that period was explained and justified by his maternal relationship to an emperor born in Japan's sacred and unending descent line. Although the *Eiga monogatari* and *Ōkagami* have literary qualities reflecting the influence of such classics as the *Genji monogatari* (Tale of Genji), the linealism of both is unmistakable.

Still another form of historical writing appeared during the last two centuries of the Heian period: the military tales (*gunki monogatari*).[33] These tales dealt mainly with the activities of the two most powerful military houses: the Minamoto and the Taira. But the first two tales (the *Hōgen monogatari* and the *Heiji monogatari*) place the stories of the emperors first, the Fujiwara aristocrats second, and the great Minamoto and Taira warriors last. In general, the stories, especially those about military leaders, reveal the effects of an underlying assumption that a person could acquire and maintain military or political power only if he had close familial ties with occupants of the throne. The most famous military tale, the *Heike monogatari*, carries a well-known passage in which the great military hero (Taira no Shigemori) criticizes his father for opposing Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, stating that the most important blessings are those received from an emperor.[34] Story after story shows that the authors were affected in deep and diverse ways by the ancient belief in the divine descent of emperors from the Sun Goddess.

The *Gukanshō*, written just before the outbreak of the 1221 war between the imperial court in Kyoto and the new military government (*bakufu*) in Kamakura, was fundamentally different from the earlier historical and military tales. The Buddhist author, Jien (1155–1225), sought not to entertain his readers with good stories about well-connected personnages of the past but to explain how the current crisis

(Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1980); and Helen Craig McCullough, *Ōkagami, the Great Mirror: Fujiwara Michinaga (966–1027) and His Times* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, and Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980).

33 The three military tales have been translated in William R. Wilson, *Hōgen Monogatari: Tale of Disorder of Hōgen* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971); Edwin O. Reischauer, "The Heiji Monogatari," *Translations from Early Japanese History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951); and Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce T. Tsuchida, *The Tale of Heike: Heike Monogatari* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975).

34 Chap. 2, NKBT 32.171–3, translated in Delmer M. Brown, "Pre-Gukanshō Historical Writing," in Delmer M. Brown and Ishida Ichiro, eds., *The Future and the Past: A Translation and Study of the Gukanshō, an Interpretative History Written in 1219* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 394–5.

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had come to pass and to explain what could and should be done to resolve it. And yet the *Gukanshō* interpretation was lineal in character: A statement made early in the first narrative chapter indicates that the author thought of his historical study as another succession tale.[35] Like the authors of the *Eiga monogatari* and the *Ōkagami*, Jien was intent on depicting the splendor of the Fujiwara heads (especially those of his own Kujō house) by showing how the Fujiwara line was joined, generation after generation, with the sacred imperial line. Before writing the narrative chapters of his study, he compiled a chronology that is a reign-by-reign delineation of imperial succession into which he fits Fujiwara ministers and Tendai abbots who were blood relatives of imperial mothers.[36] The narrative chapters themselves have a genealogical core not unlike that of earlier succession tales.

The centrality of linealism to the *Gukanshō* treatment of the past is revealed in Jien's use of the term imperial law (*ōhō*). In ancient Buddhist writings this word denoted the secular authority of rulers as distinct from the divine authority of Buddhist law (*buppō*). But for Japanese writers, imperial law was gradually narrowed to emperors who were honored as divine descendants of the Sun Goddess and who had priestly functions. Imperial law and Buddhist law were assigned divine qualities. So we read that leaders of ability should protect both and also become "receptacles for the divine blessings of Buddhas and kami."[37] Jien does not probe for the religious roots of imperial law, or even say that it was divine, but by accenting Japan's unbroken line of emperors descended from the Sun Goddess, he leaves the impression that he considered imperial law to be a divine truth revealed by ancestral kami, just as Buddhist law was a divine truth revealed by Buddha. Noting the importance of constructive principles (*dōri*) created by the ancestral kami of the imperial house, appreciating the work's emphasis on the supremacy of the Sun Goddess over other kami of Japan (and apparently over the other unseen powers), and sensing the author's assumption of a divine quality in imperial law, we see that belief in Japan's sacred imperial line was a powerful determinant in the *Gukanshō*'s view of history.

Linealism was a prominent characteristic of all historical works written in Japan's aristocratic age, and it continued to affect Japanese historical writing in later times. Because medieval and modern studies lie outside the scope of this volume, we shall end this section with the

35 Chap. 3, NKBT 86.129; Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, p. 20.
36 Chaps. 1 and 2, NKBT 86.41–128; Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, pp. 245–349.
37 Chap. 6, NKBT 86.317; Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, p. 198.

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comment that until the end of World War II, linealism was manifested over and over, not only in written expressions of historical consciousness and popular forms of drama and literature, but also in such unique Japanese "isms" as imperial restorationism (*fukkō shugi*), revere-the-emperor-ism (*sonnō shugi*), and "state-policy-ism" (*kokutai shugi*).

VITALISM

The second characteristic of early historical consciousness (vitalism) appears as a polar opposite to the Chinese emphasis on virtue (*toku* in Japanese). Because Japan's earliest extant chronicles were compiled at a time of lively interest in all aspects of Chinese culture, and Confucianism lay at the very core of Chinese cultural values, it is not surprising to find that all Six National Histories contain numerous quotations from the Confucian Classics and have a strong Confucian flavor. Indeed, between the Great Reforms of 645 and the end of the Nara period in 784, Japan's developing educational program was focused on the study of the Confucian Classics. Toward the end of that period a few ambitious aristocrats were able even to rise to inordinately high governmental posts because of their spectacular achievements in the study of Confucian literature and Chinese history. Thus the whole of Nara culture, including history writing, was affected by principles enunciated in the Confucian Classics, and from early Nara until today, Japanese historical works have usually born a Confucian stamp.

And yet the effect of Confucianism on Japan's early consciousness of the passage of time is often overstated. Although Confucian quotations are numerous and the effect of Confucian ideas can be readily detected, no item in any of the Six National Histories carries the implication that an emperor's lack of virtue (undoubtedly the most basic Confucian moral principle of all) justified his removal from the throne, a common and basic view expressed in Chinese dynastic histories when dealing with emperors whose unfortunate reigns preceded the establishment of a new dynasty. Moreover, the Japanese interest in Chinese learning and Confucianism was not associated, as in China, with the formation of a distinct and powerful literati class. Finally, no national history was ever written for the purpose of showing that improvements had been made in the conduct of governmental affairs by the power of Confucian virtue. That being so, what special belief, assumption, or value – other than the linealism just discussed – did lie at the core of Japanese historical thought in these early times?

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Scholars of intellectual and cultural history are beginning to see that although the Japanese were strongly attracted to Confucianism and other manifestations of Chinese learning after about A.D. 590, Japanese attitudes toward the process of change in human life were firmly anchored in their ancient kami belief. Taking advantage of the work of scholars who have used new archaeological and anthropological evidence to clarify the connections between kami worship (Shintoism) and community life in ancient Japan (see the Introduction), a few intellectual historians now see that Japanese assumptions and ideas concerning the passage of time have been influenced since early times by a deep and pervasive belief that the kami were worshiped, above all, for their mysterious power to create, enrich, or prolong any form of physical life.[38] Although genealogical concerns motivated officials to compile historical works, the widespread belief in the life-giving power of the kami deeply colored what they wrote, accounting for the characteristic of historical consciousness referred to here as vitalism.

Pre-Nara roots

The most common outward forms of kami worship emerged early in the Yayoi period and were intimately associated with the introduction and spread of wet-rice agriculture, but the belief in mysterious life-giving powers seem to have had even earlier roots. In the Jōmon sites scattered throughout the Japanese islands, archaeologists have found two types of religious artifacts symbolizing mysterious procreative power: clay figurines (*dogū*) and phallic stone rods (*sekibō*) (see Chapter 1). The figurines, often representing pregnant women, are sometimes found in enclosures that were probably places set aside for religious ritual. We do not know what rites were performed there, but it is assumed that the figurines were used for capturing a mysterious force (possibly the force of a kamilike deity) that could create, protect, or improve some form of life. That assumption is reinforced by archaeological reports on the nature and distribution of phallic stone rods found in numerous Jōmon sites. Like the figurines, some have been found at places suitable for religious rites. Their association with creation or procreation is equally clear. Most historians doubt that either clay figurines or phallic rods were themselves objects of worship, but they generally agree that both were used ritually for the improvement

38 For a thoughtful study of early kami worship, see Yuasa, *Kodaijin no seishin sekai*, pp. 14–102.

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of human, plant, or animal life. It is now felt that agricultural production had appeared in the closing years of the Jōmon period. The figurines and phallic rods may well have been used in prayers for good harvests.

Archaeological evidence for the later Yayoi period (roughly 250 B.C. to A.D. 250) indicates that agricultural rites were then becoming institutionalized and routinized in rice-growing communities in several regions. Considering Yayoi finds in the light of religious practices in present-day villages where life seems not to have greatly changed since Yayoi times, Harada Toshiaki reasons that most agricultural communities of the Yayoi period were growing rice on contiguous pieces of land with common supplies of water and that each village worshiped a kami for its power to make rice grow in the fields of that particular village.[39] Harada and others are inclined to think that by the last two centuries of the Yayoi period, a rice-growing village was worshiping its life-creating kami through one particular person who, chosen by some form of divine lottery, conducted rites in behalf of his or her village from the beginning of one rice growing season to the next. Rites were apparently grounded then in the belief that kami resided in a nearby mountain (the source of water) during the winter and moved – or could be moved – to some place near the village's rice fields at the beginning of the growing season. Thus the rice-agriculture character of worship, clearly detected in most Shinto rituals of today, appears to have emerged with, and taken on its basic forms during, the Yayoi period spread of paddy field rice production. Every kami was then, and still is, worshiped for its mysterious power to create and enrich life, especially the life of rice plants.

The Chinese history of the Later Han period (A.D. 25 to 220) reports that a Japanese state was ruled by a queen "who occupied herself with magic and sorcery."[40] Although we are supplied with no information about the nature of her "magic and sorcery," the reference suggests that the priestly rulers of emerging states were successors of those who had been originally chosen by an agricultural community (or by its kami) to conduct worship services during the four seasons of a year but who now held their positions for life as a hereditary right. Hereditary rulers were henceforth concerned with the control and manage-

39 Harada Toshiaki, *Kodai Nihon no skinkō to shakai* (Tokyo: Shōkō shoin, 1948); and Harada Toshiaki, "Kodai shūkyō ron," *Kodai*, vol. 2 of *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1962), pp. 279–313.

40 *Hou Han shu* 115: 16b–19a; Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 2.

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ment of regions containing many agricultural villages, and they were even involved in exchanging missions with the Chinese imperial court, but they were still essentially conductors of rites honoring the life-creating and life-enriching kami of their particular regions.

The centrality of belief in the vitalistic power of the kami is clearly reflected in Japan's earliest recorded myths as well as in its early prayers (*norito*) and festivals (*matsuri*). But probably the most significant Yayoi period evidence was provided by archaeologists who have discovered that the most sacred object (the *shintai* or kami body) of the earliest shrines was usually a nearby mountain peak from which flowed the streams that supplied water for rice fields in the valley or plain below. The most famous old shrine of that type is the Miwa Shrine, where Mt. Miwa is the shrine's *shintai*. But the ancient Futarasan Shrine at Nikkō is especially significant, as its *shintai* is a phallic-shaped mountain called Mt. Nantai (man body). Not only do streams flow from this mountain to the fields below, but its shape is that of the phallic stone rods found in preagricultural Jōmon sites.

In the later Burial Mound period, when the old interest in producing a good rice crop was joined with – if not overshadowed by – a new interest in social and political control, the forms of kami worship were greatly altered. Priestly rulers were no longer limited to clan heads who served as priests for the worship of a clan kami but included Yamato kings who conducted ceremonies for the worship of their house's ancestral kami and the worship of the ancestral kami of subject clans. Rites, myths, and symbols were constantly revised in order that they might more accurately reflect, and more impressively sanctify, current socioreligious relationships. Understanding such changes is complicated by the fact that they were gradual and uneven and by the absence of contemporary records. But it is clear that every kami was worshiped then, as in earlier and later periods of history, for its power to create and enrich physical life of any type. At the base of the belief structure was the old faith in a kami's mysterious power to make rice grow, but at a higher level of this structure was a new faith that the hereditary ruler was strong because he or she was a sacred descendant of a life-giving kami with a special power to enrich the clan.

The life-oriented agricultural character of kami worship during the Burial Mound period has been clouded somewhat by the prominence that archaeological and mythological evidence gives to the relationship of the priestly rulers to the burial mounds. Because the mounds are so numerous and large, historical studies of rulership tend to be centered

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on evidence obtained from mounds rather than from shrines, which were less imposing and had origins and development that are not so easily traced. Moreover, early reflections on the mounds have led many scholars to deduce that they were places for worshiping the souls of deceased rulers, thus confusing the function of mounds with that of shrines. Support for the ancestor-worship theory has been obtained from early myths, particularly those recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Nevertheless, more recent archaeological investigations at shrines as well as mounds, and further study of the character and evolution of myths, suggest that during the Burial Mound period, as well as before and after, beliefs about a life-giving kami at a shrine were fundamentally different from those about the soul of a leader buried in a mound.[41] The two were consistently kept apart: A shrine was not considered suitable for burials, and a burial mound not suitable for worshiping a kami. Old shrines established in that period are still places for active religious institutions, but not a single one has ever been associated, as far as is known, with a burial mound. Archaeological findings on the island *shintai* of the Munakata Shrine in Kyushu include, for example, thousands of bronze mirrors, bronze swords, *magatama*, iron tools, and other treasures deposited there during the Burial Mound period. But the island has no burial sites.[42] A study of mounds in various parts of Japan discloses, on the other hand, no known case of an early shrine's having been built over a mound. And investigations of the contents and surroundings of the mounds produce no evidence that offerings continued to be made after burial services were completed. Clear distinctions were made, then as later, between worshiping life-giving kami and honoring deceased rulers: Every kami was and still is relied on mainly for its mysterious power to create or enrich any form of life.

Even after the sixth century when clan leaders built Buddhist temples to honor their ancestors and to enhance their own authority, Buddhism was clearly distinguished from Shintoism, even though a clan's principal ancestors (the souls of which were honored at temples) had served as high priests for the worship of clan kami and considered themselves descendants of ancestral kami (honored at shrines). To be sure, the native deities were worshiped in various ways by the follow-

41 Ishida Ichirō, "Shinwa to rekishi: uji-sei ritsuryō kokka to ie-sei rikken kokka no rinen," *Nihon bunka kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1960), vol. 8, pp. 6–10.

42 *Munakata jinja shi*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Munakata jinja fukkō kiseikai, 1961, 1966, 1971); and *Munakata Okinoshima*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Munakata jinja fukkō kiseikai, 1958 and 1961).

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ers of the imported Buddhist faith. Buddhist deities took on kamilike qualities, and much Buddhist worship was directed to the enrichment of life in kamilike fashion. But even after Buddhism came to be supported by powerful clans, the enshrinement of clan kami at shrines was kept separate from the worship of Buddha at temples: Kami continued to be thought of as sources of life-restoring benefits for the living, whereas a Buddha was identified with a mysterious power that could console and please souls of the dead. Both kami shrines and Buddhist temples supported the position of priestly rulers, but everyone assumed that a kami would be repelled as much by a temple as by a burial. Even the mention of Buddhist words in a kami rite was taboo.[43] Although careful attention was given to a ruler's descent, the highest-ranking ancestral kami of all (the Sun Goddess) was still thought of as a deity that would never die, making it inappropriate that she should be linked with any temple or burial. Not until after the ninth century was the soul of a deceased emperor ever worshiped as a kami, and that was at a shrine, not at a mound or temple.[44]

Although no written historical accounts come down to us from pre-Nara times and we have no evidence of what persons (rulers or commoners) were then thinking about the progression of time, we are sure that everyone worshiped kami and that the heads of all groups (villages, clans, or the Yamato state) were conductors of kami worship. We assume, therefore, that a person's deepest concerns – including his or her thoughts about the passing of time – were influenced by the core characteristic of kami worship: belief in the power of a kami to create or enrich any form of life, here and now.

Nara period vitalism

As we noted earlier, Emperor Temmu's edict of 687 pointed to two types of sources to be used for compiling the *Kojiki:* imperial genealogies (*teiki*) and accounts of origin (*honji*). The *Kojiki*'s linealism is mirrored in its genealogies, and vitalism can be found in its myth of kami creation. But there was interaction between the historicity of the

43 Legal procedures (the compilation of which was completed in 927) list seven taboo Buddhist words: Buddha, sutra, pagoda, temple, monk, nun, and Buddhist meal; see *Engi shiki,* bk. 5 of *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbun kan, 1966) vols. 8–10, translated by Felicia Gressitt Bock, *Engi-Shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era* [*Books 1–5*] (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1970), pp. 152–3.

44 King Ôjin 's soul was enshrined at the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine which, like the Ise Shrine, was highly honored by the imperial clan.

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former and the mythology of the latter, making the genealogies somewhat mythical and the myths somewhat genealogical. *Teiki* were surely the major sources for the imperial-reign chapters of the two chronicles, and *honji* were the sources for the introductory chapters on the sacred origins of the imperial line. Vitalism in Nara period history is most sharply revealed, however, in the creation myths that make up the first chapters of both the *Kokiki* and the *Nihon shoki*.

Recent mythological studies enable us to see that the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* myths have a definite historical cast. They can be seen to deal with three successive stages of creation: (1) the emergence of heaven and earth, the first kami, and the islands of Japan; (2) the birth of the Sun Goddess (the ancestral kami of the imperial clan) and her unruly brother (the ancestral kami of a powerful clan rival); and (3) the dispatch of the Sun Goddess's grandson to earth with instructions to place Japan under the rule of the Sun Goddess's descendants. After describing the creation of heaven and earth, the myths take up the origins of the provinces and ancestral kami, linking these kami with Japan's first emperor. The life-creating quality at all three stages is revealed in the way that the myths are structured and used to affirm divine origins for the imperial line and also in their content and detail, especially at turning points in the creation process.

Although the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* versions of the first stage of the creation of heaven and earth contain words and concepts found in the Chinese Classics, scholars show that similar myths have been handed down among primitive peoples in the Ryūkyū Islands and in various regions of southeast Asia. It is therefore concluded that they were derived from old agricultural myths of islands to the south and subsequently given a Chinese flavor in order to further sanctify Japan's imperial line. The names of kami prominent in the first-stage myths (with or without Chinese overtones) usually include the word *musubu* (procreate, create, or produce), a word that points directly to the mysterious power of a kami to create and enrich the life of rice plants, as symbolized by the phallic shape of Mt. Nantai.

The second-stage creation myths, reflecting the historical emergence of clan federations and states in western Japan around the beginning of the Christian century, gradually became less agricultural and more human in character. Preoccupation was shifting from the production of rice crops to the origin and continuity of particular descent lines. Whereas the first-stage myths about the creation of heaven and earth use the metaphor of the earth's coming into existence (*naru*) like

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"reed shoots,"[45] those of the second stage tell how a male and a female kami (Izanagi and Izanami) had sexual intercourse and produced (*umu*) particular Japanese islands and, according to the *Nihon shoki*, gave birth to the Sun Goddess and her unruly brother.[46]

But the *Kojiki* version of how the Sun Goddess came into existence seems to undermine the case for vitalism. We are told there that she appeared (*naru*) after the *death* of Izanami when Izanagi removed the pollution that he had picked up while visiting Izanami in the land of the dead.[47] Although the main *Nihon shoki* version does not associate the appearance of the Sun Goddess with death pollution,[48] we are left with the puzzling question of why – in a land where kami have always been life-creating deities that abhored anything associated with death – any version should have related the appearance of the country's most important kami (the Sun Goddess) to the land of the dead.

Tsuda Sōkichi tried to answer this question by claiming that the *Kojiki* version of the Sun Goddess's appearance, as well as the myth of Izanami's death, were foreign accretions. For him the *Nihon shoki* version was a truer reflection of Japanese belief in life-giving kami.[49] But more recent investigations by ethnologists indicate that the death-oriented version found in the *Kojiki* is similar to myths handed down among peoples of southeast Asia and the south Pacific, the very areas whose myths share themes with those recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Matsumura Takeo accepts the Japaneseness of the Izanami death myth but claims that the picture presented in the *Kojiki* version is not so morbid as that drawn in similar myths of other Asian peoples, thus making it more life affirming. Apparently accepting this view, Inoue Mitsusada reminds us that even such distinguished Japanese Buddhists as Dōgen (1200–53) and Shinran (1173–1262) seem to have been more interested in life than in death, although doctrines of nonattachment to life were basic Buddhist teachings. It should also be remembered that the Sun Goddess – no matter how she came into existence – is still believed to be alive and is still worshiped as a life-creating kami. One can indeed detect notes of life affirmation even in the parting exchange between Izanagi and Izanami in which Izanagi says that he will have more people born than Izanami threatens to kill.[50]

45 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, sec. 1, NKBT 67.76–77.
46 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, sec. 3 and 4, NKBT 67.80–84.
47 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.70–71. 48 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, sec. 4, NKBT 67.86–87.
49 Tsuda Sōkichi, *Nihon jōdai shi no kenkyū*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1972), pp. 391–502. Inoue Mitsusada summarized the views of several scholars and added his own in *Shinwa kara rekishi e*, pp. 33–40.
50 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.94–95.

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Even so, the question has still not been satisfactorily answered, for Izanami's death is found at such a critical point in the *Kojiki*'s myth structure: just before the appearance of the most important kami of all, the Sun Goddess. I would venture to suggest that a more plausible interpretation is that the death myth was inserted just before the appearance of the Sun Goddess and her unruly brother in order to set the stage for later myths concerning the struggle between two kami groups: the ancestral kami of the victorious imperial house and the ancestral kami of the defeated Izumo clan. Historians generally agree that a great conflict really did break out, three or four centuries before written records were kept, between an imperial house–controlled clan federation located in Yamato and an Izumo federation based in regions to the north and east. The myths themselves contain hints of such a struggle. For example, in the opening paragraph on relations between the Sun Goddess and her brother Susa no Ō no Mikoto, we are told that the former was afraid her brother had come up to Heaven to "seize her lands."[51] Later, our attention is drawn to Susa no Ō's tearing down the banks of the Sun Goddess's irrigation ditches and filling them in with dirt.[52] Such references, together with archaeological findings, suggest that the rivalry between the two ancestral kami was one aspect of a very earthly struggle between two great clan federations.

Myths about the struggle consistently link death pollution (*tsumi*) with the loser, Susa no Ō. When telling of Susa no Ō's violence in the Sun Goddess's rice fields, they say, for example, that he "defecated and strewed the feces" around the Sun Goddess's most sacred ritual hall.[53] The Sun Goddess was inclined at first to disregard such pollution, thinking it was no more than the vomit of her drunken brother. But the misdeeds continued and even got worse. We read that Susa no Ō opened a hole in the roof of the Sun Goddess's ritual hall and threw in a sacred pony that had been skinned alive. The act was so heinous and shocking that one of the female ritual attendants died on the spot, and the Sun Goddess went into hiding. After she was coaxed from her hiding place, the myriad kami of heaven banished Susa no Ō to the land of Izumo.[54] He is depicted not only as the perpetrator of destructive and polluting acts related to death but also as a kami with a special attachment to his deceased mother (Izanami) and the land of the dead. Particularly significant is the tale in which Izanagi asked Susa no Ō

51 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.74–75. 52 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.78–79. 53 Ibid.
54 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.83–84.

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why he was weeping and howling, and he replied that he wanted to join his mother in the land of the dead. So he was expelled from heaven, the abode of kami who are free of death pollution and who do not die.[55]

But Susa no Ō no Mikoto's contamination is found only in myths that tell of the victories and superiority of the Sun Goddess. In those that detail what happened in Izumo, Susa no Ō appears as another creative and life-affirming kami who does not die. In one case, he even is presented as a hero who saves a girl slated for sacrifice to a huge snake with eight heads and eight tails and a big tree growing on its back.[56] Students of mythology detect similarities between this myth and those handed down in other parts of the world, especially in South China and Indonesia. Inoue Mitsusada notes that even in some rice-planting festivals of present-day Japan, a woman is thrown into a rice field as a symbolic sacrifice to the local kami.[57] It is therefore thought that Susa no Ō was worshiped in Izumo as an immortal kami with the power to make plants grow. Because we are told that he created a kami line that includes Izumo's ancestral kami, we believe that myths about the death of Izanami and the death associations of Susa no Ō were added to the *Kojiki* in order to enhance and sanctify the superiority of the ancestral kami of the Yamato imperial house and, at the same time, to degrade the ancestral deities of the defeated Izumo clan federation.

At the beginning of the third stage of mythological evolution comes a climactic event: the dispatch to earth of the Sun Goddess's grandson (Ninigi no Mikoto) with instructions to place Japan under the rule of her descendants. This *tenson kōrin* (descent of the grandson from heaven) myth, unlike the one about the birth of the Sun Goddess, has no associations with death.[58] Although it is followed by tales about kami on earth who act like human beings (subjected in some cases to death and burial), the emphasis is instead on the mysterious power of deities to create and enrich life. At this third and final stage, the creativity seen so clearly in Stage 1 (especially with the creation of the Japanese islands by Izanagi and Izanami) is now colored by a derivative power to create a sacred line of emperors. In other words, the

55 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.72–73.

56 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.84–87. The *Izumo fudoki*, the Izumo gazetteer submitted in 713 and still extant, contains fragments of local myths. They distinguish between heavenly and early kami, suggesting an acceptance of the Yamato court's differentiation. But the Izumo myths did not associate their kami with death. See Michiko Yamaguchi Aoki, trans., *Izumo Fudoki* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971).

57 Inoue, *Shinwa kara rekishi e*, p. 69.

58 *Kojiki*, bk. 1, NKBT 1.124–7; *Nihon shoki*, NKBT 67.134–5.

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mysterious vitalism of the kami that do not die is now extended to the creation and maintenance of an imperial line that will last forever.

The *Kojiki*'s and *Nihon shoki*'s chapters on the reigns of human emperors are also marked by the vitalism of the third-stage myths, especially in the early chapters in which history still has a mythological overlay. These tell of emperors who lived long and were in close and continuous communication with kami. But as the chronicles become historically more accurate, we still read that Yamato Takeru no Mikoto (the son of a human emperor) performed superhuman feats and had a soul that lived on after death.[59] The life-affirming tone created by an emphasis on kami origins and kamilike emperors remains strong in the second of the Six National Histories, a chronicle (the *Shoku Nihongi*) that contains edicts issued at the beginning of each new reign that declare, with remarkable consistency, that the reigning sovereign is a manifest kami who has inherited the throne from the Sun Goddess.

But the tone is stronger in items that tell how occupants of the throne concern themselves with kami worship. Such items are quite prominent after the reign of Emperor Temmu (673 to 690) who took steps to undergird his authority with a centralized and institutionalized system of kami worship – for which the emperor was the land's highest priest – that was gradually extended to the entire country. Temmu gave more attention than his predecessors to the Council of Kami Affairs (Jingi kan), instructed a princess to "purify herself" and worship the Sun Goddess at Ise Shrine in his behalf,[60] and had offerings made to every kami of the land.[61] He also initiated the practice of sending royal messengers at rice-planting time to two shrines that were famous for the worship of agricultural kami: the Hirose Shrine located at the confluence of three rivers where a kami was worshiped for its power to supply rice fields with water, and the Tatsuta Shrine located on a shore frequently hit by typhoons, a shrine in which a wind deity was worshiped for its power to prevent such wind-connected disasters as droughts and typhoons.[62] Eventually the court sent messengers to these two shrines twice a year, at the start and end of the growing season. But whenever there was a serious drought, messengers were dispatched to all shrines to offer up prayers in behalf of the emperor. Thus Temmu seems not to have thought of himself only as the high

59 *Kojiki*, bk. 2, NKBT 1.208–25; *Nihon shoki*, Keikō 27/10 to Keikō 52/5/4, NKBT 67.298–313.
60 *Nihon shoki*, Temmu 2 (673) 4/14, NKBT 68.412–13.
61 *Nihon shoki*, Temmu 3 (674) 3/7, NKBT 68.415.
62 *Nihon shoki*, Temmu 4 (675) 4/10, NKBT 68.418–19.

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priest of Sun Goddess worship but also as the high priest of kami enshrinements throughout Japan.

The vitalistic tone in Nara life and thought is probably clearest in Japan's most important kami ritual: the Great Thanksgiving Festival (Daijō-sai) held at the beginning of every reign.[63] Scholars now agree that this festival had its origins in an early harvest festival known as the festival of new fruits (Niiname-sai). The reference to "first fruits" in the ritual prayer (*norito*) offered by the emperor during the Great Thanksgiving Festival points directly to early belief in the mysterious power of kami, worshiped through the emperor, to make rice grow.[64] But two derivative beliefs are added: that the kami had created and could enrich the line of Sun Goddess rulers and that they had created and could enrich the whole of Japan.

After 725, Emperor Shōmu and his daughter (who was enthroned twice) seem to have become more devoted to Buddhism than to the worship of native deities. One might therefore assume that kami vitalism was henceforth overshadowed by Buddhist otherworldliness. As we noted, both Shōmu and his daughter continued to affirm belief in the sacred origins of the imperial line. But did Empress Shōtoku – apparently a more ardent Buddhist than Emperor Shōmu was – continue to believe in the mysterious power of the kami to create and enrich any form of life here and now? A study of the *Shoku Nihongi* items for her two reigns suggests that she did in fact pay less attention to Shinto rites than did her predecessors. After she ascended the throne a second time in 765, she apparently did not send messengers to key shrines at either the planting or harvesting times of the year. Nevertheless when famine conditions developed in various parts of the country during the following spring and summer, she made generous donations to several provincial shrines and requested that priests pray for relief.[65] Moreover, when the time came for the most important rite of all, the Great Thanksgiving Festival, Empress Shōtoku issued an edict in which she took up the question of whether an empress could or should, as a Buddhist nun, conduct this great kami-honoring festival:

63 See D. C. Holtom, *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies with an Account of the Imperial Regalia* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1972); and Felicia G. Bock, "The Enthronement Rites: The Text of *Engishiki*, 927," *Monumenta Nipponica* 45 (Autumn 1990): 307–37.

64 The oldest extant *norito* (included in the *Engishiki*) has been translated by Donald L. Philippi, *Norito: A New Translation of the Japanese Ritual Prayers* (Tokyo: Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1959).

65 *Shoku Nihongi*, Jingo 2 (766) 4/12, KT 2.326; Saeki, *Zōho rikkokushi*, 4.126.

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We feel sympathy and affection for princes, ministers, officials, and commoners who will first honor the kami of heavenly and earthly shrines and only then pay respects to the Three Treasures [of Buddhism]. But because we have returned to the throne a second time and now govern the empire, you are ordered to obtain the traditional offerings for the Great Thanksgiving Festival. . . . People feel that kami should be kept separate from, and untouched by, that which pertains to the Three Treasures, but one reads in the Buddhist sutras that kami protect and revere Buddhist law. Although we have become a Buddhist nun and put on Buddhist robes, we conclude that our being involved in the worship of Buddha is not an obstacle [to our participation in the Great Thanksgiving Festival]. Because what was originally thought to have been taboo is not taboo, we hereby issue orders that the Great Thanksgiving Festival be held.[66]

Although the edict leaves doubts about the empress's depth of faith in the native deities, it shows that she saw no reason to reject kami worship because she had become a Buddhist nun. Like so many other Japanese individuals from that day to this, she seems to have been relying on the kami for the enrichment and renewal of physical life but on Buddhism for assurances in matters of salvation and life after death.

Maruyama Masao has deepened our appreciation of the vitalistic tone of historical consciousness during the Nara period by analyzing "styles of expression" found in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.[67] He finds a life-affirming "base tone" that is disclosed in the use of creation myths to deepen and sanctify the genealogical thrust of the chronicles and in the identification of the Chinese character *toku* (a key Confucianism term usually translated as "virtue") with an ancient Japanese word *ikioi* (freely translated as "life strength"). Although creation myths also appear in early Chinese writings, they are not used, as in Japan, for introductory chapters of the country's official chronicles of the past. Maruyama decided that the Japanese compilers were expressing, through structured creation myths that made up the opening chapters of both early chronicles, a historical consciousness focused on the origin and linear development of life.[68]

An old commentary on the *Nihon shoki*, entitled the *Nihongi shiki*, shows that early scholars of Japanese historical works actually read the Chinese character *toku* (virtue) as *ikioi* (life strength).[69] Realizing that these early Japanese scholars had studied Chinese classics and knew

66 *Shoku Nihongi*, Jingo 1 (765) 11/23, KT 2.236; Saeki, *Zōho rikkokushi*, 4.126.
67 Maruyama Masao, "Rekishi ishiki no kosō," in *Rekishi shisō shū*, pp. 3–46. 68 Ibid., p. 4.
69 Ibid., p. 20. Denis Twitchett pointed out that in pre-Han times the Chinese word *te* (*toku* in Japanese) had a meaning rather close to *ikoi* (strength or power).

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that *toku* stood for one of the most basic of all Confucian principles, Maruyama rightly assigns importance to the Japanese practice of reading (or understanding) this important Chinese character as *ikioi*, an old word denoting a concept of vitality central to Japanese thought and belief at all times and places. Just how *toku* (read *ikioi*) was used and just what this usage tells us about historical consciousness at the time is revealed in myths that praise a kami or an emperor. In the *Nihon shoki* version of the Izanagi myth, to cite one example, we read that after Izanagi had demonstrated *ikioi*, he ascended to heaven. The tale contains nothing that suggests that Izanagi had acted "virtuously" (*toku*) before returning to heaven, but he had done much – such as producing the Japanese islands and the Sun Goddess – to demonstrate his "life strength" (*ikioi*).[70]

An even more telling example of how the character *toku* (read *ikioi*) is used is found in the *Nihon shoki* chapter on the reign of Yūryaku, who definitely was not virtuous. Yūryaku is described as a ruler who did not hesitate to kill anyone who crossed him. Once when a woman did not respond to his advances and became pregnant by another man, Yūryaku had both of them killed.[71] After relating other stories of Yūryaku's cruelty and inhumanity, the *Nihon shoki* reports that he had "willfully and wrongly killed so many people that he was condemned as a bad emperor."[72] The chronicles also describe a hunting expedition during which a man suddenly appeared before Emperor Yūryaku and identified himself as a manifest kami. Yūryaku and the kami then hunted together. The tale ends with the comment that "in those days everyone said that the emperor had *ikioi* [written with the Chinese character *toku*]."[73] Because Yūryaku definitely was not virtuous, we assume that he was praised for a kami-connected vitality symbolized by the old word *ikioi*. Maruyama's study of other uses of *ikioi* and words with related meanings led him to state that early Japanese writings had a life-affirming "base tone."

Vitalistic assumptions arose from ancient Shinto worship and therefore affected all aspects of Japanese culture, not just the expression of historical consciousness, as is readily detected in the *Man'yōshū* anthology of the eighth century that contains more than 4,500 poems composed over a period of more than a century by poets with wide-ranging interests and associations. Although these poems were composed by different individuals in various situations, the scholars who translated

70 *Nihon shoki*, bk. 1, NKBT 67.103. 71 *Nihon shoki*, Yūryaku 2/7, NKBT 67.462–63.
72 *Nihon shoki*, Yūryaku 2/7, NKBT 67.465. 73 *Nihon shoki*, Yūryaku 4/2, NKBT 67.466–7.

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them into English agree that they retain a "primitive vitality."[74] To be sure, we find expressions of unhappiness and even despair (especially in poems on the death of a loved one), but even those that bear signs of a Buddhist influence do not show an acceptance of the Buddhist teaching that all attachments to life should be rejected. The last part of a poem by Ōtomo no Tabito, composed a few years before his death in 730, even expresses disinterest in the Buddhist idea of the transmigration of the soul and preferences for the pleasures of this life:

> If I could but be happy in this life,
> What should I care if in the next
> I became a bird or a worm.
> All living things die in the end:
> So long as I live here
> I want the cup of pleasure.[75]

Post-Nara vitalism

Maruyama concludes on the basis of his linguistic analysis that this vitalistic base tone persisted in later Heian period writings about the past.[76] Such persistence is reflected in historical tales (*rekishi monogatari*) and military tales (*gunki monogatari*). Both lack any consistent attempt to show that the course of events was affected by the presence or absence of virtue, and they stress, more and more strongly with the passage of time, traditional life-affirming values and tastes. After the waning of ninth-century enthusiasm for all forms of Chinese culture, men and women who figure prominently in tales are not praised so much for their accomplishments in the Chinese arts or for their practice of Confucian virtue as for such traditional qualities as vigor, liveliness, and effectiveness in the handling of state affairs, qualities central to the emerging military ethic.

As Helen McCullough noted in the introduction to her translation of the *Ōkagami*, the authors of Heian period tales distinguished between personal qualities that had a life-affirming Japanese character – identified with such words as *tamashii* (spirit), *yamatodamashii* (Japanese spirit), and *yamatogokoro* (Japanese heart) – and those that did not.[77] *The Tale of Genji*, written early in the tenth century when Japanese aristocrats were still attracted to Chinese tastes and interests, presents a suggestive contrast between Kaoru, who conforms to the ideal of a civilized person who had assimilated Chinese culture, and

74 *Man'yōshū*, p. lxix. 75 Ibid., p. 118.
76 Maruyama, "Rekishi ishiki no kosō," pp. 13–14. 77 *Ōkagami*, pp. 43–51.

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Niou, a clever, decisive, and unscrupulous person who had not mastered polite accomplishments and tastes introduced from abroad. Kaoru, not Niou, is favored by the female author.

By the time the *Ōkagami* was written in the closing years of the following century, the Japanese qualities associated with Niou were more highly regarded. In this second of the two famous historical tales, as McCullough pointed out, the great Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027) was depicted as a man unhampered by Chinese notions who had the vital quality of *tamashii* and knew how to get things done.[78] In the biographical chapter on Michinaga, we read that when Michinaga's father told his three sons (Michinaga and two older brothers) that they "couldn't even get close enough [to a certain accomplished aristocrat] to tread on his shadow," Michinaga retorted, "I may not tread on his shadow, but I'll walk all over his face."[79] The same self-confidence and vigor are revealed in the famous story of Michinaga's rivalry with Fujiwara no Korechika (993–1010), a nephew who outranked Michinaga for about ten months in 994–95. At an archery contest held during that period, Michinaga shot two arrows that hit closer to the mark than Korechika's. Then when it was proposed that two more shots be fired, Michinaga agreed but added, "If emperors are to issue from my house, let this arrow hit the mark." On the second shot Michinaga's arrow struck the bull's eye "with such force that the target almost broke," thereby ending the match.[80]

The military tales, written in the early years of Japan's military age, set an even greater store by *tamashii*-like qualities. The first work of this type, the *Hōgen monogatari,* has a prominent Fujiwara leader ridiculing Sino-aristocratic tastes in these words: "Poetry is an amusement for a time of leisure and is not needed for court ceremony. Calligraphy, also one of the entertainments, is not necessarily an important accomplishment for a wise minister."[81] Then, when turning to stories about the principal military hero, Minamoto no Tametomo (1139–70), we are told that Tametomo was seven feet tall, had a bow that took five men to string, and was so wild that he was sent off to Kyushu (at the age of thirteen) to keep him out of trouble. He then subjugated the nine provinces of Kyushu within three years.[82] The last and most famous of the military tales, the *Heike monogatari,* has Taira no Kiyomori taking pride in his knowledge of proper aristocratic be-

78 Ibid., p. 52. 79 Ibid., p. 193. 80 Ibid., pp. 196–7.
81 *Hōgen monogatari,* chap. 1, NKBT 31.64–65.
82 *Hōgen monogatari,* chap. 1, NKBT 31.84.

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havior but depicts him as a cruel, arrogant, and unprincipled man who made this deathbed pronouncement:

> Since the Hōgen and Heiji eras [1156–60], I have frequently subdued enemies of the imperial court and obtained generous rewards. Although of humble origin, I have become the grandfather of an emperor and been appointed prime minister, achieving glory and fame for my descendants. Not one thing more do I desire in this life. My only regret is that I have not yet seen the head of Minamoto no Yoritomo, the former major of the left guards who has been exiled to the province of Izu. After I am dead, I want no temples or pagodas built and no Buddhist rites performed. Instead, I want to have Yoritomo attacked immediately and his head placed before my grave. That is the only rite I request.[83]

Although military tales are thought to have been recited and recorded by aristocrats steeped in Chinese learning (often making their military heroes act in an aristocratic manner), they reveal an increasingly deep appreciation of such vitalistic qualities as physical strength, courage, ingenuity, self-confidence, and the ability to achieve results: an enthusiastic return to the traditional life-affirming and life-centered values referred to here as vitalism.

OPTIMISM

The third characteristic of early historical consciousness (optimism about the immediate future) emerged as a by-product of interaction between the first two characteristics: linealism (which had drawn attention to the movement of events from the past through the present into the future) and vitalism (which added a life-affirming tone to descriptions of those events). Although linealism is revealed when examining ancient historical writings against the backdrop of Chinese belief in dynastic cycles, and vitalism, against the backdrop of Confucian concepts of moral power, optimism is reflected in resistance to Buddhist doctrines of historical decline. Like the first two characteristics, the third has roots that run deep into "prehistoric" times.

Pre-Nara roots

The earliest known description of life in Japan, found in the history of the Chinese kingdom of Wei (A.D. 221–65), says nothing about optimism but provides comments that, when considered in the light of archaeological and mythological evidence, enable us to deduce that the

83 *Heike monogatari*, chap. 6, NKBT 32.409.

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Japanese were already more deeply immersed in the possibilities of the present than in nostalgia for an ideal past or in longings for a glorious life after death:

> The land of Wa is warm and mild [in climate]. In winter as in summer the people live on vegetables and go about barefooted. Their houses have rooms; father and mother, elder and younger sleep separately. They smear their bodies with pink and scarlet, just as the Chinese use powder. They serve meat on bamboo and wooden trays, helping themselves with their fingers. When a person dies, they prepare a single coffin, without an outer one. They cover the graves with sand to make a mound. When death occurs, mourning is observed for more than ten days, during which time they do not eat meat. The head mourners wail and lament while friends sing, dance, and drink liquor. When the funeral is over, all members of the whole family go into the water to cleanse themselves in a bath of purification.[84]

The report that the Japanese covered graves with sand to make a mound would indicate a special reverence for the deceased, but a study of burial sites of this and the preceding Jōmon period offers no supporting evidence for the view that prayers or offerings were made at graves after burial.[85] Nor does this Chinese report suggest that the Japanese of these early times concerned themselves with life after death or with a utopian future. It is thought that people were not then absorbed in questions about either the distant past or the distant future but in the forward movement of life through seasons and life cycles. They must have felt that just as growing seasons of the year alternate with cold seasons of little growth, birth and death precede and follow the departure of a soul.

The case for a lack of interest in either a dead past or an after-death future seems, at first glance, harder to make for the years of the Burial Mound age when so much time and energy were spent in making huge mounds in which to bury deceased rulers. Especially troublesome is the old but unconvincing theory that mounds were places for the worship of ancestors. But it is now felt that they were built for deceased rulers, not for everyone, and that they were not places where souls were worshiped as kami that exercised their special power to produce good harvests or benefit life in other concrete ways. As we pointed out, mounds were erected by clan heads for several interrelated purposes: to legitimize and sanctify their authority, to remove death pollution, and/or to console the souls of deceased predecessors.

84 *Wei chih* 30: 25b–31a, Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*, p. 11.
85 Okamoto Isamu, "Genshi shakai no seisan to jujutsu," *Genshi oyobi kodai*, vol. 1 of *Iwanami kōza: Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1975), pp. 103–12.

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Archaeological findings at burial mound sites provide no evidence that they were ever places for idolizing past models or future utopias.[86] When doing the backbreaking work of hauling dirt for a huge mound, laborers must have had little or no interest in the demands of the past or the promises of the future, concerning themselves only with present and future possibilities.

Soon after the introduction and spread of Buddhism in the sixth century, some aristocrats, such as Prince Shōtoku, were drawn to the historic Buddha's message that enlightenment could be achieved only by freeing oneself from attachments to anything impermanent, including life itself (see Chapter 7). But in these early times most Japanese were attracted to visible aspects of the imported faith: to the exotic sutras and paraphernalia used in intricate ceremonies performed at impressive temples built in a continental style. At first, the Buddhist temples – like the burial mounds they gradually replaced – were apparently valued above all for their sanctification of the clan leader's descent. But as the priests gained greater understanding of Buddhist writings, they paid more attention to prayers and rites that might benefit the clan leaders in other ways: curing an ailing aristocrat, ending a famine, or quieting the angry soul of a deceased leader who had been badly treated (see Chapter 3). But nothing found in seventh-century inscriptions, poems, or documents gives the impression that the worship of Buddha, even by aristocratic patrons, was arousing Japanese interest in doctrines of either continuous deterioration over time or life in paradise after death. As yet, most Buddhist worship was meant mainly to improve life of the present in concrete ways.

Nara period optimism

During the century and a half following the Great Reforms of 645, Japanese aristocratic culture was fundamentally transformed. Under the spell of widespread fascination with Chinese techniques and learning, Japan's ruling elite – especially Emperor Shōmu and his daughter who occupied the throne twice – made Buddhism virtually a state religion. An increasingly large number of aristocrats were attracted to the Buddhist teachings of "rebirth" in the Pure Land paradise after death, and were also gaining familiarity with Buddhist sutras that detailed an inevitable and progressive historical decline for thousands of years to come. But a study of those two areas of Buddhist thought – both

86 Amakasu Ken, "Kofun no keisei to gijutsu no hattatsu," in *Genshi oyobi kodai*, pp. 274–321.

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rooted in pessimism about humanity's present condition – suggests that historians and poets were still interested mainly in the possibilities of the present.

As a result of historical research by Inoue Mitsusada, we know that Nara period aristocrats bowed before statues of Amida Buddha as well as before representations of the Pure Land paradise and that many temple compounds of that period contained Amida halls.[87] But in looking at Pure Land Buddhist worship as a whole, Inoue sees two distinct types: one for helping others (deceased ancestors) achieve rebirth in the Pure Land, and another for helping oneself obtain rebirth after death. He concluded that only the first type existed in the Nara period and that the second did not appear until the ninth or tenth century. Because the earlier type was meant to benefit the souls of deceased ancestors, it further enhanced the Buddhist temple function of honoring souls of the dead, making a temple an even more acceptable substitute for a burial mound. Pure Land worship was not yet causing individuals to reject (or be depressed about) life or to become absorbed in the glories of paradise after death.

One leading Buddhist school (the Kusha) of the Nara period embraced the Abhidharma kosá which proclaims a doctrine of kalpic decline, declaring that (1) time moves through one large kalpa after another, (2) each large kalpa rotates through four middle kalpa (one each for development, existence, destruction, and emptiness), (3) each middle kalpa includes twenty small kalpa, and (4) each small kalpa is divided into improving and deteriorating halves. The vast length of kalpas is disclosed by the statement that at the beginning of the deteriorating half of a small kalpa, a person's life expectancy is 80,000 years but decreases one year every century until, at the end of a deteriorating half, a person can expect to live no more than 10 years. Because the sutra claims that world history is now in the deteriorating half of the twentieth small kalpa of a middle kalpa of existence and that deterioration affects the whole universe and everything in it (not just life expectancy), Buddhist students of the sutra came to believe that history will be subjected to general and progressive decay for a very long time to come. The Abhidharma kósa delineates three stages of deterioration in the history of Buddhism itself: (1) the age of true law (*shōbō*), lasting for one thousand years after the death of Buddha, during which time sentient beings were able to understand the teachings of Buddha (the *kyō*), to practice Buddhist discipline (*gyō*), and to achieve Buddhist

87 Inoue Mitsusada, *Watakushi no kodai shigaku* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 1982), pp. 123–42.

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enlightenment (*shō*); (2) the age of imitation law (*zōhō*), the next one thousand years when people are no longer capable of achieving Buddhist enlightenment; and (3) the age of final law (*mappō*), a long period of ten thousand years or so during which sentient beings will be able to understand only (simplified) Buddhist teachings.[88]

Some Japanese aristocrats of the Nara period had become familiar with the Abhidharma kósa doctrine concerning the passage of time and also with the Chinese view that each of the three Buddhist teachings (*sankai kyō*) was appropriate to one of the three ages of Buddhist decline: one-vehicle Buddhism for the age of true law, three-vehicle Buddhism for the age of imitation law, and "universally correct and true Buddhism" for the age of final law. In 820 a Buddhist priest by the name of Keikai wrote a book (the *Nihon ryōiki*) in which he referred to the three ages of Buddhist decline and deduced that people had already entered the age of final law.[89]

A study of chronicles and documents written in the Nara period indicates, however, that such a pessimistic view of history was held by only a few Nara aristocrats. Not until Saichō (767–822), the priest who introduced Tendai Buddhism to Japan, did a known Buddhist writer claim that humanity was about to enter (or had entered) the age of final law and that a form of Buddhism appropriate to those desperate times should be practiced.[90] Chronicles written during and covering the Nara period, especially the *Nihon shoki* and the *Shoku Nihongi*, contain numerous references to Buddhist temples, statues, sutras, and rites; but they reflect little interest in Pure Land doctrines of salvation after death or in Buddhist doctrines of inevitable historical decline. Furthermore, no known chronicle, poem, or document of the period reflects an assumption that the present is worse than some ideal time in the past or that the present is another low point in a long and inevitable process of decay. Instead, the underlying tone is one of optimism about the possibilities and promise of the present.

This tone has been identified by Maruyama Masao with the old word *nariyuku*, appearing frequently in Nara period texts and meaning something like "the process of becoming."[91] The first part of the word

88 As outlined in Ishida Ichirō, "Structure of *Gukanshō* Thought," in Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, pp. 422–6.

89 *Nihon ryōi-ki* chap. 3, NKBT 70.303; Kyoko Motomichi Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 221.

90 Saichō memorial, Kōnin 10 (814), *Dengyō daishi zenshū* (Kyoto: Hieizan toshokan, 1927), vol. 1, p. 590; and Delmer Brown, "Pre-*Gukanshō* Historical Writing," in *The Future and the Past*, pp. 370–4.

91 Maruyama, "Rekishi ishiki no kosō," pp. 6–15.

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(*naru*) was used over and over in ancient myths when referring to the activities of kami, whether they were creating, procreating, transforming, or becoming. The second part (*yuku*) denoted movement through time. The process is described rather explicitly in an imperial edict issued in 743: "As long as heaven and earth shall last, blessings will continue to be received, one after the other [*tsugitsugi ni*]."[92] Optimism is expressed somewhat differently in a longer passage found in at least three Nara period edicts:

> Hear ye, an edict proclaimed by an occupant of the Sun Goddess–inherited throne that was first occupied by an emperor sent down to earth from the high heavenly plain and then occupied by a succession of Sun Goddess–descended emperors down to the middle present. This edict is proclaimed in accordance with kami will and an imperial function that continuously blesses the state with good governance.[93]

In addition to containing an emphasis on the continuing blessings of imperial rule, the passage includes the phrase "down to the middle present" (*nakaima ni itaru*). Because the character for "present" or "now" is modified by the one for "middle," we have surmised that the drafters were referring to a present that stands in a middle position between the past and the future, to a process of change made by emperors acting in accord with the will of the kami. Such optimism about the immediate future helps us understand the lack of interest in, and rejection of, pessimistic doctrines found in Buddhist sutras on rebirth in the Pure Land after death or on the inevitability of historical decay.

Although the power of optimism is detected in the tone and wording of edicts issued by emperors and empresses, as well as in a general lack of enthusiasm for Buddhism doctrines of Pure Land paradise and inevitable decline, it is also expressed in Nara period poems. A notable example is the one composed by the poet Kasa no Kanamura and included in the *Man'yōshū* concerning Emperor Shōmu's visit to Yoshino in the fifth month of 725. Its opening lines are as follows:

> Lo! the unsullied stream of the Yoshino,
> Thundering through the mountains,
> Rushes down the cascades.
> In the upper reach the plovers cry incessantly,
> In the lower reach the song-frogs call to their mates,
> While here and there the palace lords and ladies

92 *Shoku Nihongi*, Shōmu edict, Tempyō 15(743)/5/5, KT 1.172.
93 *Shoku Nihongi*, Mommu edict, Mommu 1(697)/2, KT 2.1; Gemmei edict, Wadō 1(780)/1/11, KT 2.33; Shōmu edict, Jinki 1(724)/2/4, KT 2.98–99.

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Gaily throng the banks;
Enchanted am I beyond words
Whenever I watch the scene.
May it ever be thus – continuous
As the fair creeping vine – for ten thousand ages.
So in awe I pray to the gods of heaven and earth.[94]

Post-Nara optimism

For a century or more after the Nara period, Japanese aristocrats were more deeply affected than ever by Chinese culture and thought. They became increasingly familiar with Chinese writings in all fields, including Buddhism, and were therefore influenced by ideas and beliefs that stood poles apart from traditional optimism about the passage of time. As already noted, Pure Land Buddhism had by then become a movement centered on the rebirth of believers in the Pure Land paradise, not simply on the rebirth of deceased ancestors;[95] and Buddhist doctrines concerning inevitable historical decline figured more prominently in the religious and literary works of the period, especially after eleventh-century social disturbances suggested that the final age had indeed arrived. And yet a close look at what was written during those troubled times fails to disclose a single historical or military tale that explains the course of human affairs in terms of a process of deterioration that cannot be prevented or checked. Noting this and sensing a strong optimistic tone in the writings of that day, we see that Japanese intellectuals were not deeply affected by Buddhist doctrines of progressive decay and that their historical outlook was still influenced more by life-affirming assumptions of growth than by life-denying doctrines of imported Buddhism.[96]

The character of the Pure Land movement in the Heian period is particularly instructive. Inoue's study led him to conclude that participants in the increasingly active Pure Land form of Buddhism were no more interested in their own rebirth in Pure Land than in the rebirth of deceased ancestors. But aristocrats who joined the movement and who were influenced by Genshin's (1042–17) *Ōjō yōshū* (Teachings essential to rebirth), apparently thought of Pure Land practices as contemplative religious activity in tune with the ascetic spirit of the times, not simply the best way to ensure rebirth in Pure Land after death.[97] The splendor of worship at Fujiwara no Michinaga's great

94 *Man'yōshū*, pp. 100–1. 95 Inoue, *Watakushi no kodai shigaku*, p. 125.
96 See Brown, "Pre-*Gukanshō* Historical Writing," pp. 374–419.
97 Inoue, *Watakushi no kodai shigaku*, p. 131.

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Pure Land temple (the Hōjō-ji, founded in 1020) was described at length in the *Eiga monogatari* and in such terms as these:

> The repentance rites were about to begin as [the nuns] arrived at the Amida Buddha hall. They mounted the steps in high spirits and gazed at the sacred images, shining with innumerable rays of light, which seemed to fill all worlds in the ten directions. Then they recalled these words from *Ōjō yōshū*: "They kneel on the steps adorned with the seven treasures, gaze at the holy form of a myriad virtues, listen to the doctrine of the one truth, and enter the sea of Fugen's vows. Tears of joy flow from their eyes; adoration penetrates to their very marrow."[98]

The opening sentence of that same chapter implies that worshipers of Amida Buddha at the Hōjō-ji felt they were seeing and experiencing the glories of Pure Land then and there. Thus the new preoccupation with rebirth does not seem to have been so much a product of pessimism about the present as a new way of enriching life, now and in the immediate future.

In later years of Pure Land history, especially at the time of Shinran, worshipers were urged to recognize the impermanence of life as well as its essential filth and misery: If they actually saw life in this polluted world as it really was, they would be more apt to develop faith in the saving power of Amida Buddha. The typical Pure Land art form of the period was that of a "two-river white line" (*nika byakudō*) painting divided into three sections: realistic representations of life in this miserable world (*edo*) at the bottom, two treacherous streams (one of water and one of fire) crossed by a narrow white road in the middle, and a glorious picture of the Pure Land (*jōdo*) at the top.[99] Paintings of this type were meant to help a Pure Land believer realize how repulsive this world is and to see that only by crossing the white line of simple faith could he or she hope to enter Amida Buddha's paradise after death. Shinran's world-denying teachings, so vividly represented in the "two-river white line" paintings, were deemed especially appropriate to the age of final law when the whole cosmos and everything in it, including human beings, were reaching an advanced stage of deterioration, one in which no individual had any power to achieve salvation except by absolute faith in the vow of Amida to lead the faithful into paradise at the time of death.

At no other period in Japanese history did some individuals so firmly and clearly reject life, seeing nothing good in the present and

98 McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, vol. 2, pp. 573–4.

99 See the painting in the Cleveland Museum of Art, reproduced in *Bukkyō kaiga*, vol. 1 of *Zaigai Nihon no shihō* (Tokyo: Mainichi shimbunsha, 1980), no. 34.

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nothing hopeful about the future except rebirth in a Buddhist paradise in the next life. But such individuals were apparently few in number. And by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when Pure Land Buddhism had become a popular religious movement, believers were not drawn so much to the glories of the Pure Land after death as to the excitement of Pure Land congregational life in the present. Ienaga Saburō wrote a classic study, the title of which may be translated "The development of the doctrine of denial in Japanese thought," in which he concludes that the Buddhist doctrine of denial was overwhelmed in the history of Japanese thought by traditional Japanese optimism.[100] As Pure Land temples spread to all regions of Japan, becoming a popular religious movement, their religious activities gravitated toward memorial services for deceased ancestors of Pure Land believers. Pure Land temples are still numerous and strong in present-day Japan, but the most popular Buddhist movement is the Sōka Gakkai, a sect that promises health, wealth, and happiness now.

The post-Nara reaction of Japanese writers to Buddhist doctrines of inevitable historical decline is also instructive. In the great debate that Saichō (767–822), the founder of Tendai Buddhism, had with priests at the old Nara capital, Saichō argued that Tendai (or the Great Vehicle Buddhism of the Lotus Sutra) was superior to all other Buddhist teachings because it was suitable for the approaching age of final law.[101] Although court aristocrats became more familiar with the doctrine of kalpic decline during the remaining centuries of the Heian period, especially after 1052 when the age of final law was said to have begun, their writings indicate that they were not particularly depressed about the present and that they were still optimistic about the possibilities of future improvement. The second great historical tale, the *Ōkagami* – written after history was thought to have entered its last and most deteriorated age, while Japanese social and political life was disintegrating and while the aristocratic age was giving way to a military one – made references to the doctrine of kalpic decline.[102] But its stories about the past were not written to show that Japanese history was moving toward social decay and human hopelessness.

Telling evidence of the persistence of optimism is found in the *Gukanshō*. Written by a Buddhist priest who was familiar with the Buddhist doctrine of kalpic decline, this classical historical treatise attempted to show how the current political troubles could and should

100 Ienaga Saburō, *Nihon shisō shi ni okeru hitei no ronri no hattatsu*, vol. 10 of *Sōsho meicho no fukkō* (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1969).

101 Brown, "Pre-*Gukanshō* Historical Writing," pp. 371–2. 102 *Ōkagami*, pp. 235–6.

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be resolved. The author, Jien (1155–1225), had been a four-time holder of the highest Buddhist position of all: abbot of the powerful Tendai sect. His interpretation is rooted in the assumption that there had been successive periods of deterioration in Japanese history. But even this Buddhist historian, steeped in Buddhist thought and writing at a very difficult time for himself and his house, was obviously far more interested in periods of temporary improvement – high points in the history of Buddhism, his Fujiwara clan, and finally his Kujō house – than in periods of sharp decline. He was especially optimistic about the immediate future, for which time he claimed the native kami had created a special form of rule in which Jien's own nephew would hold the two most powerful positions in the land: regent for the emperor, and shogun of the military government. He expressed his optimism about the immediate future as follows:

> The Sun Goddess enshrined at Ise and the Great Illuminating kami enshrined at Kasuga certainly consulted together and decided (*gijō*) [how imperial rule was to be supported] in the distant past. And the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva and the Great Illuminating Kami of Kasuga consulted together and decided [how imperial rule is to be supported] in the present. Thus the state was, and is to be, maintained. It is clear that the kami decision for these final reigns of the present, made after the state had been buffeted this way and that, requires that the sovereign have a guardian who has the power of both learning and military might.[103]

In the closing section of the *Gukanshō*'s summary chapter, Jien states that as bad as the situation had become, "substantial improvement" can be achieved if persons who have enough ability (*kiryō*) to understand the principle created by kami for the immediate future are placed in control of state affairs.[104] Because Jien made a remarkably consistent attempt to show that history – driven this way and that by a complex interplay of Principles – was moving along a "single road" toward future improvement, it was decided that the translation and study of the *Gukanshō* should be entitled *The Future and the Past*. So even in this historical interpretation, written by a Buddhist priest who was familiar with and influenced by the Buddhist doctrine of kalpic decline, and written at a time of crisis in the affairs of state, the spirit of optimism prevailed.

The author of the next interpretative history, Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354) who wrote the *Jinnō shōtōki* in 1339, was even more optimistic than Jien. He was unable to accept Jien's statement that

103 Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, p. 228 (translation revised). 104 Ibid., p. 239.

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Japan's imperial line would end after the one hundredth reign, arguing that one hundred meant an indefinitely large number.[105] Japanese historical works were never again shaped by the pessimism of belief of kalpic decline and continued to reflect optimism about the future of the human condition.

The significance of the three characteristics of historical thought discussed in this chapter cannot be fully understood without considering the effect each had on the other two. A general overview of the interaction suggests that vitalism (rooted in beliefs about kami power) is the most basic of the three. But that quality was not taken up first because it was genealogical concerns (linealism) that had motivated officials to compile chronicles and that gave these chronicles their essential form and content. Nevertheless, belief in the divinity and continuity of the imperial line (and of the descent lines of other important clans) was firmly grounded in an ancient and lasting belief in the mysterious, creative power of kami. This is made clear in the first mythological sections of Japan's earliest extant chronicles in which myths were obviously selected and subjected to revision in order to sanctify further the origin and continuity of the imperial line. Optimism, the third characteristic, was also rooted in beliefs about the life-giving and life-enriching native kami. Jien, a high-ranking and influential Buddhist priest, even stated that a promising political plan for the immediate future had been created by the most powerful and prestigious life-giving ancestral kami of Japan. Thus the three characteristics had a deeper influence on the historical consciousness because they reinforced one another.

Admittedly, the three characteristics (and others not considered here) can be found in other cultural traditions. But I submit that all three, separately and in combination, were especially strong and persistent in the early evolution of Japanese historical consciousness: Official chronicles were motivated and molded by lineal concerns; belief in kami origins, kami creativity, and kami worship provided a vitalistic tone to writings about the past; and preoccupation with the growth dimension of life even made Jien – a thirteenth-century Buddhist writing a history at a time of crisis – quite sure that the immediate future would be better than the present. The persistence and power of these characteristics in a period when Japanese intellectuals were deeply

105 *Jinnō shōtōki* NKBT 87.66, translated by Paul H. Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinnō Shōtōki of Kitabatake Chikafusa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 84.

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immersed in Chinese learning indicate that they had come from the very taproots of Japanese culture. Instead of being influenced by a Chinese-style absorption in the rise and fall of dynasties, Japanese aristocrats were preoccupied with a single line of sovereigns created by the Sun Goddess. Instead of assuming that the course of human affairs was shaped by the moral and immoral actions of humans as propounded in the Confucian Classics, ancient chronicles made vitalistic strength (*ikioi*) a major historical determinant. And instead of accepting Buddhist doctrines of inevitable decline, poets and chroniclers were buoyed by a widespread assumption that the future would be better than the present.

Evidence for this study has been taken almost exclusively from materials written by members of Japan's ruling elite, men and women who did not concern themselves with the thoughts and beliefs of commoners. We therefore have no direct way of knowing whether linealism, vitalism, and optimism had any relevance to what a villager thought or felt about the passage of time. Probably he or she was not even aware of what was being written and read at the imperial court and undoubtedly could have cared less about aristocratic affirmations of genealogical descent, worship of ancestral kami, or talk about rebirth in some Buddhist heaven. Linealism (arising from the preoccupations of rulers) probably had not yet worked its way down into the consciousness of people at the base of society. But clearly, vitalism and optimism (arising from deep and popular belief in the power of the kami) had worked their way up into the consciousness of those aristocrats who wrote poems and stories and who compiled anthologies, legal codes, gazetteers, and chronicles.

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